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QUENTIN DURWARD.

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PRINTED BY JULES DIDOT, SENIOR,

PRINTER TO HIS MAJESTY, RUE DU PONT-DE-LODI, N° 6.

QUENTIN DURWARD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF «WAVERLEY,» ETC.

La guerre est ma patrie,
Mon harnois ma maison,
Et en toute saison
Combattre c'est ma vie.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

PARIS:

PUBLISHED BY A. AND W. GALIGNANI,

AT THE ENGLISH, FRENCH, ITALIAN, GERMAN, AND SPANISH LIBRARY,

N° 18, RUE VIVIENNE.

1827.

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MONACENSIS.

QUENTIN DURWARD.

CHAPTER I.

THE SURRENDER.

Rescue or none, Sir Knight, I am your captive;
Deal with me what your nobleness suggests—
Thinking the chance of war may one day place you
Where I must now be reckon'd—i' the roll
Of melancholy prisoners.

Anonymous.

THE skirmish betwixt the Schwarz-reiters and the Burgundian men-at-arms lasted scarcely five minutes, so soon were the former put to the rout by the superiority of the latter, in armour, weight of horse, and military spirit. In less than the space we have mentioned, the Count of Crevecœur, wiping his bloody sword upon his horse's mane ere he sheathed it, came back to the verge of the forest, where Isabelle had remained a spectator of the combat. One part

of his people followed him, while the other continued to pursue the flying enemy for a little space along the causeway.

« It is shame, » said the count, « that the weapons of knights and gentlemen should be soiled by the blood of those brutal swine. »

So saying, he returned his weapon to the sheath, and added, « This is a rough welcome to your home, my pretty cousin, but wandering princesses must expect such adventures. And well I came up in time, for, let me assure you, the Black Troopers respect a countess's coronet as little as a country-wench's coif, and I think your retinue is not qualified for much resistance. »

« My lord count, » said the Lady Isabelle, « without further preface, let me know if I am a prisoner, and where you are to conduct me. »

« You know, you silly child, » answered the count, « how I would answer that question, did it rest on me. But you, and your foolish match-making, marriage-hunting aunt, have made such wild use of your wings of late, that I fear you must be contented to fold them up in a cage for a little while. For my part, my duty, and it is a sad one, will be ended when I have conducted you to the court of the Duke, at Peronne; for which purpose, I hold it necessary to deliver the command of this reconnoitring party to my nephew, Count Stephen, while I return with you thither, as I think you may

need an intercessor—And I hope the young giddy-pate will discharge his duty wisely.»

«So please you, fair uncle,» said Count Stephen, «if you doubt my capacity to conduct the men-at-arms, even remain with them yourself, and I will be the servant and guard of the Countess Isabelle of Croye.»

«No doubt, fair nephew,» answered his uncle, «this were a goodly improvement on my scheme; but methinks I like it as well in the way I planned it. Please you, therefore, to take notice, that your business here is not to hunt after and stick these black hogs, for which you seemed but now to have felt an especial vocation, but to bring me true tidings what is going forward in the country of Liege, concerning which we hear such wild rumours. Let some half a score of lances follow me, and the rest remain with my banner, under your guidance.»

«Yet one moment, cousin of Crevecœur,» said the Countess Isabelle, «and let me, in yielding myself prisoner, stipulate at least for the safety of those who have befriended me in my misfortunes. Permit this good fellow, my trusty guide, to go back unharmed to his native town of Liege.»

«My nephew,» said Crevecœur, after looking sharply at Glover's honest breadth of countenance, «shall guard this good fellow, who seems, indeed, to have little harm in him, as

far into the territory as he himself advances, and then leave him at liberty.»

«Fail not to remember me to the kind Gertrude,» said the countess to her guide, and added, taking a string of pearls from under her veil, «Pray her to wear this in remembrance of her unhappy friend.»

Honest Glover took the string of pearls, and kissed, with clownish gesture, but with sincere kindness, the fair hand which had found such a delicate mode of remunerating his own labours and peril.

«Umph! signs and token!» said the count; «any further bequests to make, my fair cousin? —It is time we were on the way.»

«Only,» said the countess, making an effort to speak, «that you will be pleased to be favourable to this—this—this young gentleman.»

«Umph!» said Crevecœur, casting the same penetrating glance on Quentin which he had bestowed on Glover, but apparently with a much less satisfactory result, and mimicking, though not offensively, the embarrassment of the countess—«Umph! —Ay,—this is a blade of another temper.—And pray, my cousin, what has this—this—this *very* young gentleman done, to deserve such intercession at your hands?»

«He has saved my life and honour,» said the countess, reddening with shame and resentment.

Quentin also blushed with indignation, but wisely concluded, that to give vent to it might only make matters worse.

« Life and honour?—Umph! »—said again the Count Crevecœur; « methinks it would have been as well, my cousin, if you had not put yourself in the way of lying under such obligations to this very young gentleman.—But let it pass. The young gentleman may wait on us, if his quality permit, and I will see he has no injury—only, I will myself take the office of protecting your life and honour, and may perhaps find for him some fitter duty than that of being a squire of the body to damosels errant. »

« My lord count, » said Durward, unable to keep silence any longer, « lest you should talk of a stranger in slighter terms than you might afterwards think becoming, I take leave to tell you that I am Quentin Durward, an archer of the Scottish Body-guard, in which, as you well know, none but gentlemen and men of honour are enrolled. »

« I thank you for your information, and I kiss your hands, Seignor Archer, » said Crevecœur, in the same tone of raillery. Have the goodness to ride with me to the front of the party. »

As Quentin moved onward at the command of the count, who had now the power, if not the right, to dictate his motions, he observed

that the Lady Isabelle followed his motions with a look of anxious and timid interest, which amounted almost to tenderness, and the sight of which brought water into his own eyes. But he remembered that he had a man's part to sustain before Crevecœur, who, perhaps, of all the chivalry in France or Burgundy, was least like to be moved to any thing but laughter by a tale of true-love sorrow. He determined, therefore, not to wait his addressing him, but to open the conversation in a tone which should assert his claim to fair treatment, and to more respect than the count, offended perhaps at finding a person of such inferior note placed so near the confidence of his high-born and wealthy cousin, seemed disposed to entertain for him.

« My Lord Count of Crevecœur, » he said, in a temperate but firm tone of voice, « may I request of you, before our interview goes farther, to tell me if I am at liberty, or am to account myself your prisoner? »

« A shrewd question, » replied the count, « which, at present, I can only answer by another—Are France and Burgundy, think you, at peace or war with each other? »

« That, » replied the Scot, « you, my lord, should certainly know better than I. I have been absent from the court of France, and have heard no news for some time. »

« Look you there, » said the count; « you see

how easy it is to ask questions, but how difficult to answer them. Why I myself, who have been at Peronne with the Duke for this week and better, cannot resolve this riddle any more than you; and yet, Sir Squire, upon solution of that question depends the said point, whether you are prisoner or free man; and, for the present, I must hold you as the former—Only if you have really and honestly been of service to my kinswoman, and if you are candid in your answers to the questions I shall ask, affairs shall stand the better with you.»

« The Countess of Croye,» said Quentin, «is best judge if I have rendered any service, and to her I refer you on that matter. My answers you will yourself judge of when you ask me your questions. »

« Umph!—haughty enough,» muttered the Count of Crevecœur, «and very like one that wears a lady's favour in his hat, and thinks he must carry things with a high tone, to honour the precious remnant of silk and tinsel.—Well, sir, I trust it will be no abatement of your dignity, if you answer me how long you have been about the person of the Lady Isabelle of Croye? »

« Count of Crevecœur, » said Quentin Durward, « if I answer questions which are asked in a tone approaching towards insult, it is only lest injurious inferences should be drawn from my silence respecting one to whom we are

both obliged to render justice. I have acted as escort to the Lady Isabelle since she left France to retire into Flanders. »

« Ho! ho! » said the count; « and that is to say, since she fled from Plessis-les-Tours?— You, an archer of the Scottish Guard, accompanied her, of course, by the express orders of King Louis?»

However little Quentin thought himself indebted to the King of France, who, in contriving the surprisal of the Countess Isabelle by William de la Marck, had probably calculated on the young Scotchman being slain in her defence, he did not yet conceive himself at liberty to betray any trust which Louis had reposed, or had seemed to repose in him, and therefore replied to Count Crevecœur's inference, « that it was sufficient for him to have the authority of his superior officer for what he had done, and he inquired no further.»

«It is quite sufficient,» said the count. «We know the King does not permit his officers to send the Archers of his Guard to prance like paladins by the bridle-rein of wandering ladies, without he hath some politic purpose to serve. It will be difficult for King Louis to continue to aver so boldly, that he knew not of the ladies of Croye's having escaped from France, since they were escorted by one of his own Life-guard.—And whither, Sir Archer, was your retreat directed? »

« To Liege, my lord,» answered the Scot; « where the ladies desired to be placed under the protection of the late bishop.»

« The *late* bishop!» exclaimed the Count of Crevecœur; « is Louis of Bourbon dead?—Not a word of his illness had reached the Duke—Of what did he die?»

« He sleeps in a bloody grave, my lord—that is, if his murderers have conferred one on his remains.»

« Murdered! » exclaimed Crevecœur again —« Holy Mother of Heaven!—young man, it is impossible.»

« I saw the deed done with my own eyes, and many an act of horror besides.»

« Saw it! and made not in to help the good prelate!» exclaimed the count; « or to raise the castle against his murderers?—Know'st thou not, that even to look on such a deed, without resisting it, is profane sacrilege?»

« To be brief, my lord, » said Durward, «ere this act was done, the castle was stormed by the blood-thirsty William de la Marck, with help of the insurgent Liegeois.»

«I am struck with thunder,» said Crevecœur. « Liege in insurrection!—Schonwaldt taken! —the bishop murdered!—Messenger of sorrow, never did one man unfold such a packet of woes!—Speak—knew you of this assault—of this insurrection—of this murder?—Speak —thou art one of Louis's trusted Archers, and

it is he that has aimed this painful arrow.—Speak, or I will have thee torn with wild horses!»

«And if I *am* so torn, my lord, there can be nothing rent out of me, that may not become a true Scottish gentleman. I know no more of these villanies than you,—was so far from being partaker in them, that I would have withstood them to the uttermost, had my means, in a twentieth degree, equalled my inclination. But what could I do?—they were hundreds, and I but one. My only care was to rescue the Countess Isabelle, and in that I was happily successful. Yet, had I been near enough when the ruffian déed was so cruelly done on the old man, I had saved his grey hairs, or I had avenged them; and as it was, my abhorrence was spoken loud enough to prevent other horrors.»

«I believe thee, youth,» said the count; «thou art neither of an age nor nature to be trusted with such bloody work, however well fitted to be the squire of dames. But alas! for the kind and generous prelate, to be murdered on the hearth where he so often entertained the stranger with Christian charity and princely bounty —and that by a wretch! a monster! a portentous growth of blood and cruelty!—bred up in the very hall where he has embrued his hands in his benefactor's blood! But I know not Charles of Burgundy—nay, I should doubt of the justice

of Heaven, if vengeance be not as sharp, and sudden, and severe, as this villany has been unexampled in atrocity. And, if no other were to pursue the murderer,»—here he paused, grasped his sword, then, quitting his bridle, struck both gauntleted hands upon his breast, until his corslet clattered, and finally held them up to heaven, as he solemnly continued—«I—I, Philip Crevecœur of Cordès, make a vow to God, Saint Lambert, and the Three Kings of Cologne, that small shall be my thought of other earthly concerns, till I take full revenge on the murderers of the good Louis of Bourbon, whether I find them in forest or field, in city or in country, in hill or plain, in King's court, or in God's church! and thereto I pledge lands and living, friends and followers, life and honour. So help me God and Saint Lambert of Liege, and the Three Kings of Cologne!»

When the Count of Crevecœur had made his vow, his mind seemed in some sort relieved from the overwhelming grief and astonishment with which he had heard the fatal tragedy that had been acted at Schonwaldt, and he proceeded to question Durward more minutely concerning the particulars of that disastrous affair, which the Scot, noways desirous to abate the spirit of revenge which the count entertained against William de la Marck, gave him at full length.

« But those blind, unsteady, faithless, fickle beasts, the Liegeois,» said the count, «that they should have combined themselves with this inexorable robber and murderer, to put to death their lawful prince!»

Durward here informed the enraged Burgundian that the Liegeois, or at least the better class of them, however rashly they had run into the rebellion against their bishop, had no design, so far as appeared to him, to aid in the execrable deed of De la Marck; but, on the contrary, would have prevented it if they had had the means, and were struck with horror when they beheld it.»

« Speak not of the faithless, inconstant, plebeian rabble!» said Crevecœur. «When they took arms against a prince, who had no fault, save that he was too kind and too good a master for such a set of ungrateful slaves—when they armed against him, and broke into his peaceful house, what was there in their intention but murder?—when they banded themselves with the Wild Boar of Ardennes, the greatest homicide in the marches of Flanders, what else could there be in his purpose *but* murder, which is the very trade he lives by? And again, was it not one of their own vile rabble who did the very deed, by thine own account? —I hope to see their canals running blood by the light of their burning houses. Oh, the kind, noble, generous lord, whom they have

murdered!—Other vassals have rebelled under the pressure of imposts and penury; but the men of Liege, in the fulness of insolence and plenty.»—He again abandoned the reins of his war-horse, and wrung bitterly the hands, which his mail-gloves rendered untractable. Quentin easily saw that the grief which he manifested was augmented by the bitter recollection of past intercourse and friendship with the sufferer, and was silent accordingly; respecting feelings which he was unwilling to aggravate, and at the same time felt it impossible to sooth.

But the Count of Crevecœur returned again and again to the subject—questioned him on every particular of the surprise of Schonwaldt, and the death of the bishop; and then suddenly, as if he had recollected something which had escaped his memory, demanded what had become of the Lady Hameline, and why she was not with her kinswoman? «Not,» he added, contemptuously, «that I consider her absence as at all a loss to the Countess Isabelle; for although she was her kinswoman, and upon the whole well-meaning, yet the court of Cocagne never produced such a fantastic fool; and I hold it for certain, that her niece, whom I have always observed to be a modest and orderly young woman, was led into the absurd frolic of flying from Burgundy to France, by that

blundering, romantic, old, match-making and match-seeking idiot!»

What a speech for a romantic lover to hear! and to hear, too, when it would have been ridiculous in him to attempt what it was impossible for him to achieve,—namely, to convince the count, by force of arms, that he did foul wrong to the countess—the peerless in sense as in beauty—in terming her a modest and orderly young woman; qualities which might have been predicated with propriety of the daughter of a sun-burnt peasant, who lived by goading the oxen, while her father held the plough. And then, to suppose her under the domination and supreme guidance of a silly and romantic aunt!— the slander should have been repelled down the slanderer's throat. But the open, though severe, physiognomy of the Count of Crevecœur, the total contempt which he seemed to entertain for those feelings which were uppermost in Quentin's bosom, overawed him; not for fear of the count's fame in arms—that was a risk which would have increased his desire of making out a challenge—but in dread of ridicule, the weapon of all others most feared by enthusiasts of every description, and which, from its predominance over such minds, often checks what is absurd, and often smothers that which is noble.

Under the influence of this fear, of becoming an object of scorn rather than resentment,

Durward, though with some pain, confined his reply to a confused account of the Lady Hameline having made her escape from Schonwaldt before the attack took place. He could not, indeed, have made his story very distinct, without throwing ridicule on the near relation of Isabelle, and perhaps incurring some himself, as having been the object of her preposterous expectations. He added to his embarrassed detail, that he had heard a report, though a vague one, of the Lady Hameline having again fallen into the hands of William de la Marck.

«I trust in Saint Lambert that he will marry her,» said Crevecœur; «as, indeed, he is like enough to do, for the sake of her money-bags; and equally like to knock her upon the head, so soon as these are either secured in his own grasp, or, at farthest, emptied.»

The count then proceeded to ask so many questions concerning the mode in which both ladies had conducted themselves on the journey, the degree of intimacy to which they admitted Quentin himself, and other trying particulars, that, vexed and ashamed and angry, the youth was scarce able to conceal his embarrassment from the keen-sighted soldier and courtier, who seemed suddenly disposed to take leave of him, saying at the same time, «Umph.—I see it is as I conjectured, on one side at least; I trust the other party has kept

her senses better.—Come, Sir Squire, spur on, and keep the van, while I fall back to discourse with the Lady Isabelle. I think I have learned now so much from you that I can talk to her of these sad passages without hurting her nicety, though I have fretted yours a little.—Yet stay, young gallant--one word ere you go. You have had, I imagine, a happy journey through Fairy-land—all full of heroic adventure, and high hope and wild minstrel-like delusion, like the gardens of Morgaine la Fay. Forget it all, young soldier,» he added, touching him on the shoulder; «remember yonder lady only as the honoured Countess of Croye—forget her as a wandering and adventurous damsel : and her friends—one of them I can answer for—will remember, on their part, only the services you have done her, and forget the unreasonable reward which you have had the boldness to propose to yourself.»

Enraged that he had been unable to conceal from the sharp-sighted Crevecœur feelings which the count seemed to consider as the object of ridicule, Quentin replied, indignantly, «My lord count, when I require advice of you, I will ask it; when I demand assistance of you, it will be time enough to refuse it; when I set peculiar value on your opinion of me, it will not be too late to express it.»

«Heyday!» said the count; «I have come

between Amadis and Oriana, and must expect a challenge to the lists!»

«You speak as if that were an impossibility,» said Quentin—«When I broke a lance with the Duke of Orleans, it was against a breast in which flowed better blood than that of Crevecœur—When I measured swords with Dunois, I engaged a better warrior.»

«Now Heaven nourish thy judgment, gentle youth,» said Crevecœur. «If thou speak'st truth, thou hast had singular luck in this world; and, truly, if it be the pleasure of Providence exposes thee to such trials, without a beard on thy lip, thou wilt be mad with vanity ere thou writest thyself man. Thou canst not move me to anger, though thou may'st to mirth. Believe me, though thou may'st have fought with princes, and played the champion for countesses, by some of those freaks which Fortune will sometimes exhibit, thou art by no means the equal of those of whom thou hast been either the casual opponent, or more casual companion. I can allow thee, like a youth who hath listened to romances till he fancied himself a paladin, to form pretty dreams for some time; but thou must not be angry at a well-meaning friend, though he shake thee something roughly by the shoulders to awake thee.»

«My lord count,» said Quentin, «my family——»

«Nay, it was not utterly of family that I spoke,» said the count; «but of rank, fortune, high station, and so forth, which place a distance between various degrees and classes of persons.—As for birth, all men are descended from Adam and Eve.»

«My Lord Count,» repeated Quentin, «my ancestors, the Durwards of Glen-houlakin——»

«Nay,» said the count, «if you claim a farther descent for them than from Adam, I have done! Good even to you.»

He reined back his horse, and paused to join the countess, to whom, if possible, his insinuations and advices, however well meant, were still more disagreeable than to Quentin, who, as he rode on, muttered to himself, «Cold-blooded, insolent, overweening coxcomb!—Would that the next Scottish archer who has his harquebuss pointed at thee, may not let thee off so easily as I did!»

In the evening they reached the town of Charleroi, on the Sambre, where the Count of Crevecœur had determined to leave the Countess Isabelle, whom the terror and fatigue of yesterday, joined to a flight of fifty miles since morning, and the various distressing sensations by which it was accompanied, had made incapable of travelling farther, with safety to her health. The count consigned her, in a state of great exhaustion, to the care of the abbess of the Cistercian convent in Charleroi, a noble

lady, to whom both the families of Crevecœur and Croye were related, and in whose prudence and kindness he could repose confidence.

Crevecœur himself only stopped to recommend the utmost caution to the governor of a small Burgundian garrison who occupied the place, and required him also to mount a guard of honour upon the convent during the residence of the Countess Isabelle of Croye,—ostensibly to secure her safety, but perhaps secretly to prevent her attempting to escape. The count only assigned as a cause for the garrison being vigilant, some vague rumours which he had heard of disturbances in the bishopric of Liege. But he was determined himself to be the first who should carry the formidable news of the insurrection and the murder of the bishop, in all their horrible reality, to Duke Charles; and for that purpose, having procured fresh horses for himself and suite, he mounted with the resolution of continuing his journey to Peronne without stopping for repose; and informing Quentin Durward that he must attend him, he made, at the same time, a mock apology for parting fair company, but hoped, that to so devoted a squire of dames a night's journey by moon-shine would be more agreeable, than supinely to yield himself to slumber like an ordinary mortal.

Quentin, already sufficiently afflicted by

finding that he was to be parted from Isabelle, longed to answer this taunt with an indignant defiance; but aware that the count would only laugh at his anger, and despise his challenge, he resolved to wait some future time, when he might have an opportunity of obtaining some amends from this proud lord, who, though for very different reasons, had become nearly as odious to him as the Wild Boar of Ardennes himself. He therefore assented to Crevecœur's proposal, as to what he had no choice of declining, and they pursued in company, and with all the dispatch they could exert, the road between Charleroi and Peronne.

CHAPTER II.

THE UNBIDDEN GUEST.

No human quality is so well wove
In warp and woof, but there 's some flaw in it:
I 've known a brave man fly a shepherd's cur,
A wise man so demean him, drivelling idiocy
Had well nigh been ashamed on't. For your crafty,
Your worldly-wise man, he, above the rest,
Weaves his own snares so fine, he 's often caught in them.

Old Play.

QUENTIN, during the earlier part of the night-journey, had to combat with that bitter heart-ache, when youth parts, and probably for ever, with her he loves. As, pressed by the urgency of the moment, and the impatience of Crevecœur, they hasted on through the rich low-lands of Hainault, under the benign guidance of a rich and lustrous harvest-moon, she shed her yellow influence over rich and deep pastures, wood-land, and corn-fields, from which the husbandmen were using her light to withdraw the grain, such was the industry of the Flemings, even at that period; she shone on

broad, level, and fructifyng rivers, where glided the white sail in the service of commerce, uninterrupted by rock or torrent, beside lively quiet villages, whose external decency and cleanliness expressed the ease and comfort of the inhabitants;—she gleamed upon the feudal castle of many a gallant baron and knight, with its deep moat, battlemented court, and high belfry, for the chivalry of Hainault was renowned among the nobles of Europe;—and her light displayed at a distance, in its broad beam, the gigantic towers of more than one lofty minster.

Yet all this fair variety, however differing from the waste and wilderness of his own land, interrupted not the course of Quentin's regrets and sorrows. He had left his heart behind him, when he departed from Charleroi; and the only reflection which the further journey inspired was, that every step was carrying him farther from Isabelle. His imagination was taxed to recal every word she had spoken, every look she had directed towards him; and, as happens frequently in such cases, the impression made upon his imagination by the recollection of these particulars, was even stronger than the realities themselves had excited.

At length, after the cold hour of midnight was past, in spite alike of love and of sorrow, the extreme fatigue which Quentin had under-

gone the two preceding days began to have an effect on him, which his habits of exercise of every kind, and his singular alertness and activity of character, as well as the painful nature of the reflexions which occupied his thoughts, had hitherto prevented his experiencing. The ideas of his mind began to be so little corrected by the exertions of his senses, worn out and deadened as the latter now were by extremity of fatigue, that the visions which the former drew superseded or perverted the information conveyed by the blunted organs of seeing and hearing; and Durward was only sensible that he was awake, by the exertions which, sensible of the peril of his situation, he occasionally made, to resist falling into a deep and dead sleep. Every now and then, a strong consciousness of the risk of falling from or with his horse roused him to exertion and animation; but ere long his eyes again were dimmed by confused shades of all sorts of mingled colours, the moon-light landscape swam before them, and he was so much overcome with fatigue, that the Count of Crevecœur, observing his condition, was at length compelled to order two of his attendants, one to each rein of Durward's bridle, in order to prevent the risk of his falling from his horse.

When, at length, they reached the town of Landrecy, the count, in compassion to the

youth, who had now been in a great measure without sleep for three nights, allowed himself and his retinue a halt of four hours, for rest and refreshment.

Deep and sound were Quentin's slumbers, until they were broken by the sound of the count's trumpet, and the cry of his fouriers and harbingers, «*Debout! debout!—Ha! messires, en route, en route!*»—Yet, unwelcomely early as the tones came, they awaked him a different being in strength and spirits from what he had fallen asleep. Confidence in himself and his fortunes returned with his reviving spirits, and with the rising sun. He thought of his love no longer as a desperate and fantastic dream, but as a high and invigorating principle, to be cherished in his bosom, although he might never propose to himself, under all the difficulties by which he was beset, to bring it to any prosperous issue.—« The pilot,» he reflected, « steers his bark by the polar star, although he never expects to become possessor of it; and the thoughts of Isabelle of Croye shall make me a worthy man-at-arms, though I may never see her more. When she hears that a Scottish soldier, named Quentin Durward, distinguished himself in a well-fought field, or left his body on the breach of a disputed fortress, she will remember the companion of her journey, as one who did all in his power to avert the snares and mis-

fortunes which beset it, and perhaps will honour his memory with a tear, his coffin with a garland.»

In this manly mood of bearing his misfortune, Quentin felt himself more able to receive and reply to the jests of the Count of Crevecœur, who passed several on his alleged effeminacy and incapacity of undergoing fatigue. The young Scot accommodated himself so good-humouredly to the count's raillery, and replied at once so happily and so respectfully, that the change of his tone and manner made obviously a more favourable impression on the count than he had entertained from his prisoner's conduct during the preceding evening, when, rendered irritable by the feelings of his situation, he was alternately moodily silent or fiercely argumentative.

The veteran soldier began at length to take notice of him, as a pretty fellow, of whom something might be made; and more than hinted to him, that, would he but resign his situation in the Archer-guard of France, he would undertake to have him enrolled in the household of the Duke of Burgundy, in an honourable condition, and would himself take care of his advancement. And although Quentin, with suitable expressions of gratitude, declined this favour at present, until he should find out how far he had to complain of his

original patron, King Louis, he, nevertheless, continued to be on good terms with the Count of Crevecœur; and, while his enthusiastic mode of thinking, and his foreign and idiomatical manner of expressing himself often excited a smile on the grave cheek of the count, that smile had lost all that it had of sarcastic and bitter, and did not exceed the limits of good humour and good manners.

Thus travelling on with much more harmony than on the preceding day, the little party came at last within two miles of the famous and strong town of Peronne, near which the Duke of Burgundy's army lay encamped, ready, as was supposed, to invade France; and, in opposition to which, Louis XI. had himself assembled a strong force near Saint Maxence, for the purpose of bringing to reason his overpowerful vassal.

Peronne, situated upon a deep river, in a flat country, and surrounded by strong bulwarks and profound moats, was accounted in ancient, as in modern times, one of the strongest fortresses in France.[1] The Count of Crevecœur, his retinue, and his prisoner, were approaching the fortress about the third hour after noon;

[1] Indeed, though lying on an exposed and warlike frontier, it was never taken by an enemy, but preserved the proud name of Peronne la Pucelle, until the Duke of Wellington, a great destroyer of that sort of reputation, took the place in the memorable advance upon Paris in 1815.

when, riding through the pleasant glades of a large forest, which then covered the approach to the town on the east side, they were met by two men of rank, as appeared from the number of their attendants, dressed in the habits worn in time of peace; and who, to judge from the falcons which they carried on their wrists, and the number of spaniels and greyhounds led by their followers, were engaged in the amusement of hawking. But on perceiving Crevecœur, with whose appearance and liveries they were sufficiently intimate, they quitted the search which they were making for a heron along the banks of a long artificial canal, and came galloping towards him.

«News, news, Count of Crevecœur!» they cried both together;—«will you give news, or take news? or will you barter fairly?»

«I would barter fairly, messires,» said Crevecœur, after saluting them courteously, «did I conceive you had any news of importance sufficient to make an equivalent for mine.»

The two sportsmen smiled on each other; and the taller of the two, a fine baronial figure, with a dark countenance, marked with that sort of sadness which some physiognomists ascribe to a melancholy temperament, and some, as the Italian statuary augured of the visage of Charles I., consider as predicting an unhappy death, turning to his companion, said, «Crevecœur has been in Brabant, the country of

commerce, and he has learned all its artifices —he will be too hard for us if we drive a bargain.»

«Messires,» said Crevecœur, «the Duke ought in justice to have the first of my wares, as the seigneur takes his toll before open market begins. But tell me, are your news of a sad or a pleasant complexion?»

The person whom he particularly addressed was a little lively-looking man, with an eye of great vivacity, which was corrected by an expression of reflection and gravity about the mouth and upper lip—the whole physiognomy marking a man rather of counsel than of action, who saw and judged rapidily, but was sage and slow in forming resolutions or in expressing opinions. This was the famous Sieur d'Argenton, better known in history, and amongst historians, by the venerable name of Philip des Comines, at this time close to the person of Duke Charles the Bold, and one of his most esteemed counsellors. He answered Crevecœur's question concerning the complexion of the news of which he and his companion, the Baron d'Hymbercourt, were the depositaries.—«They were,» he said, «like the colours of the rainbow, various in hue, as they might be received from different points, and placed betwixt the black cloud and the fair sky—Such a rainbow was never seen in France or Flanders since that of Noah's ark.»

«My tidings,» replied Crevecœur, «are altogether like the comet; gloomy, wild, and terrible in themselves, yet to be accounted the forerunners of still greater and more terrible evils which are to ensue.»

«We must open our bales,» said d'Argenton to his companion, «or our market will be forestalled by some new-comers, for ours are public news.—In one word, Crevecœur—listen, and wonder—King Louis is at Peronne!»

«What!» said the count, in astonishment; «has the Duke retreated without a battle? and do you remain here in your dress of peace, after the town is besieged by the French?—for I cannot suppose it taken.»

«No, surely,» said d'Hymbercourt, «the banners of Burgundy have not gone back a foot; and still King Louis is here.»

«Then Edward of England must have come over the seas with his bowmen,» said Crevecœur, «and, like his ancestor, gained a second field of Poictiers.»

«Not so,» said d'Argenton— «not a French banner has been borne down, not a sail spread from England—where Edward is too much amused among the wives of the citizens of London, to think of playing the Black Prince. Hear the extraordinary truth. You know, when you left us, that the conference between the commissioners on the parts of France and Bur-

gundy was broken up, without apparent chance of reconciliation.»

«True; and we dreamt of nothing but war.»

«What has followed has been indeed so like a dream,» said d'Argenton, «that I almost expect to awake and find it so. Only one day since, the Duke had in a council protested so furiously against further delay, that it was resolved to send a defiance to the King, and march forward instantly into France. Toison d'Or, commissioned for the purpose, had put on his official dress, and had his foot in the stirrup to mount his horse, when lo! the French herald Mont-joie rode into our camp. We thought of nothing else than that Louis had been before-hand with our defiance; and began to consider how much the Duke would resent their advice, which had prevented him from being the first to declare war. But a council being speedily assembled, what was our wonder when the herald informed us, that Louis, King of France, was scarce an hour's riding behind, intending to visit Charles, Duke of Burgundy, with a small retinue, in order that their differences might be settled at a personal interview.»

«You surprise me, messires,» said Crevecœur; «and yet you surprise me less than you might have expected—for, when I was last at Plessis-lès-Tours, the all-trusted Cardinal Balue, offended with his master, and Burgundian at

heart, did hint to me, that he could so work upon Louis's peculiar foibles, as to lead him to bring himself into such a position, with regard to Burgundy, that the Duke might have the terms of peace of his own making. But I never suspected that so old a fox as Louis could have been induced to come into the trap of his own accord. What said the council?»

«As you may guess,» answered d'Hymbercourt; «talked much of faith to be observed, and little of advantage to be obtained, by such a visit; while it was manifest they thought almost entirely of the last, and were only anxious to find some way to reconcile it with the necessary preservation of appearances.»

«And what said the Duke?» continued the Count of Crevecœur.

«Spoke brief and bold as usual,» replied d'Argenton.—«'Which of you was it,' he asked, 'who witnessed the meeting of my cousin Louis and me after the battle of Montlhéry, when I was so thoughtless as to accompany him back within the entrenchments of Paris with half a score of attendants, and so put my person at the King's mercy?' I replied, that most of us had been present; and none could ever forget the alarm which it had been his pleasure to give us. 'Well,' said the Duke, 'you blamed me for my folly, and I confessed to you that I had acted like a giddy-pated boy; and I am aware, too, that my father, of happy

memory, being then alive, my kinsman, Louis, would have had less advantage by seizing on my person than I might now have by securing his. But, nevertheless, if my royal kinsman comes hither on the present occasion, in the same singleness of heart under which I then acted, he shall be royally welcome—If it is meant by this appearance of confidence, to circumvent and to blind me, till he executes some of his politic schemes, by Saint George of Burgundy, let him look to it!' And so, having turned up his mustachios, and stamped on the ground, he ordered us all to get on our horses, and receive so extraordinary a guest.»

«And you met the King accordingly?» replied the Count of Crevecœur—«Miracles have not ceased!—How was he accompanied?»

«As slightly as might be,» answered Hymbercourt; «only a score or two of the Scottish Guard, and a few knights and gentlemen of his household—among whom his astrologer, Galeotti, made the gayest figure.»

«That fellow,» said Crevecœur, «holds some dependence on the Cardinal Balue—I should not be surprised that he has had his share in determining the King to this step of doubtful policy. Any nobility of higher rank?»

«There are Monseigneur of Orleans and Dunois,» replied d'Argenton.

«I will have a rouse with Dunois,» said

Crevecœur, «wag the world as it will. But we heard they were in prison.»

«They were both under arrest in the Castle of Loches, that delightful place of retirement for the French nobility,» said Hymbercourt; «but Louis has released them, in order to bring them with him—perhaps because he cared not to leave Orleans behind. For his other attendants, faith, I think his gossip, the hangman-marshal, with two or three of his retinue, and Oliver, his barber, may be the most considerable—and the whole so poorly arrayed, that, by my honour, the King resembles most an old usurer going to collect desperate debts, attended by a body of catchpoles.»

«And where is he lodged?» said Crevecœur.

«Nay, that,» replied d'Argenton, «is the most marvellous of all. Our Duke offered to let the King's Archer-Guard have a gate of the town, and a bridge of boats over the Somme, and to have assigned to Louis himself the adjoining house, belonging to a wealthy burgess, Giles Orthen; but, in going thither, the King espied the banners of De Lau and Pencil de Rivière, whom he had banished from France; and scared, as it would seem, with the thought of being so near refugees and malcontents of his own making, he craved to be lodged in the Castle of Peronne, and *there* he hath his abode accordingly.»

«Why, God ha' mercy!» exclaimed Creve-

cœur, « this is not only being content with venturing into the lion's den, but thrusting his head into his very jaws—Nothing less than the very bottom of the rat-trap would serve the crafty old politician.»

« Nay,» said d'Argenton, « Hymbercourt hath not told you the speech of Le Glorieux—which, in my mind, was the shrewdest opinion that was given.»

« And what said *his* most illustrious wisdom?» asked the count.

« As the Duke,» replied d'Argenton, « was hastily ordering some vessels and ornaments of plate, and the like, to be prepared as presents for the King and his retinue, by way of welcome on his arrival, 'Trouble not thy small brain about it, my friend Charles,' said Le Glorieux, 'I will give thy cousin Louis a nobler and a fitter gift than thou canst; and that is my cap and bells, and my bauble to boot; for, by the mass, he is a greater fool than I am, for putting himself in thy power.' 'But if I give him no reason to repent it, sirrah, how then?' said the Duke. 'Then, truly, Charles, thou shalt have cap and bauble thyself, as the greatest fool of the three of us.' I promise you this knavish quip touched the Duke closely—I saw him change colour and bite his lip.—And now, our news are told, noble Crevecœur, and what think you they resemble?»

« A mine full-charged with gunpowder,» an-

swered Crevecœur, « to which, I fear, it is my fate to bring the linstock. Your news and mine are like flax and fire, or like certain chemical substances which cannot be mingled without an explosion. Friends,—gentlemen, —ride close by my rein; and when I tell you what has chanced in the bishopric of Liege, I think you will be of opinion, that King Louis might as safely have undertaken a pilgrimage to the infernal regions, as this ill-timed visit to Peronne.»

The two nobles drew up close on either hand of the count, and listened, with half-suppressed exclamations, and gestures of the deepest wonder and interest, to his account of the transactions at Liege and Schonwaldt. Quentin was then called forward, and examined and re-examined on the particulars of the bishop's death, until at length he refused to answer any further interrogatories, not knowing wherefore they were asked, or what use might be made of his replies.

They now reached the rich and level banks of the Somme, and the ancient walls of the little town of Peronne la Pucelle, and the deep green meadows adjoining, now whitened with the numerous tents of the Duke of Burgundy's army, amounting to about fifteen thousand men.

CHAPTER III.

THE INTERVIEW.

When princes meet, astrologers may mark it
An ominous conjunction, full of boding,
Like that of Mars with Saturn.

Old Play.

One hardly knows whether to term it a privilege or a penalty annexed to the quality of princes, that, in their intercourse with each other, they are required, by the respect which is due to their own rank and dignity, to regulate their feelings and expressions by a severe etiquette, which precludes all violent and avowed display of passion, and which, but that the whole world are aware that this assumed complaisance is a matter of ceremony, might justly pass for profound dissimulation. It is no less certain, however, that the overstepping of these bounds of ceremonial, for the purpose of giving more direct vent to their angry passions, has the effect of compromising their dignity with the world in general, as was par-

ticularly noted when those distinguished rivals, Francis the First, and the Emperor Charles, gave each other the lie direct, and were desirous of deciding their differences hand to hand, in single combat.

Charles of Burgundy, the most hasty and impatient, nay, the most imprudent prince of his time, found himself, nevertheless, fettered within the magic circle which prescribed the most profound deference to Louis, as his suzerain and liege lord, who had deigned to confer upon him, a vassal of the crown, the distinguished honour of a personal visit. Dressed in his ducal mantle, and attended by his great officers, and principal knights and nobles, he went in gallant cavalcade, to receive Louis XI. His retinue absolutely blazed with gold and silver; for the wealth of the court of England being exhausted by the wars of York and Lancaster, and the expenditure of France limited by the economy of the Sovereign, that of Burgundy was for the time the most magnificent in Europe. The cortege of Louis, on the contrary, was few in number and comparatively mean in appearance, and the exterior of the King himself, in a thread-bare cloak, with his wonted old high-crowned hat stuck full of images, rendered the contrast yet more striking; and while the Duke, richly attired with coronet and mantle of state, threw himself from his noble charger, and, kneeling on one knee,

offered to hold the stirrup while Louis dismounted from his little ambling palfrey, the effect was almost grotesque.

The greeting between the two potentates was of course, as full of affected kindness and compliment as it was totally devoid of sincerity. But the temper of the Duke rendered it much more difficult for him to preserve the necessary appearances, in voice, speech, and demeanour, while in the King, every species of simulation and dissimulation seemed so much a part of his nature, that those best acquainted with him could not have distinguished what was feigned from what was real.

Perhaps the most accurate illustration, were it not unworthy two such high potentates, would be, to suppose the King in the situation of a stranger, perfectly acquainted with the habits and dispositions of the canine race, who, for some purpose of his own, is desirous to make friends with a large and surly mastiff who holds him in suspicion, and is disposed to fly upon him on the first symptoms either of diffidence or of umbrage. The mastiff growls internally, erects his bristles, shows his teeth, yet takes shame to fly upon the intruder, who seems at the same time so kind, and so confiding, and therefore the animal endures advances which are far from pacifying him, watching at the same time the slightest opportunity which

may justify him in his own eyes for seizing his friend by the throat.

The King was no doubt sensible, from the altered voice, constrained manner, and abrupt gestures of the Duke, that the game he had to play was delicate, and perhaps he more than once repented having ever taken it in hand. But repentance was too late, and all that remained for him was that inimitable dexterity of management, which the King understood equally at least to any man that ever lived.

The demeanour which Louis used towards the Duke, was such as to resemble the kind overflowing of the heart in a moment of sincere reconciliation with an honoured and tried friend, from whom he had been estranged by temporary circumstances now passed away, and forgotten as soon as removed. The King blamed himself for not having sooner taken the decisive step, of convincing his kind and good kinsman by such a mark of confidence as he was now bestowing, that the angry passages which had occurred betwixt them were nothing in his remembrance, when weighed against the kindness which received him when an exile from France, and under the displeasure of the King his father. He spoke of the Good Duke of Burgundy, as Philip the father of Duke Charles was currently called, and remembered a thousand instances of his paternal kindness.

« I think, cousin, » he said, « your father made little difference in his affection, betwixt you and me; for I remember, when by an accident I had bewildered myself in a hunting-party, I found the good duke upbraiding you with leaving me in the forest, as if you had been careless of the safety of an elder brother. »

The Duke of Burgundy's features were naturally harsh and severe; and when he attempted to smile, in polite acquiescence to the truth of what the King told him, the grimace which he made was truly diabolical.

Prince of dissemblers, he said, in his secret soul, would that it stood with my honour to remind you how you have requited all the benefits of our house!

« And then, » continued the King, « if the ties of consanguinity and gratitude are not sufficient to bind us together, my fair cousin, we have those of spiritual relationship; for I am god-father to your fair daughter Mary, who is as dear to me as one of my own maidens; and when the saints (their holy name be blessed!) sent me a little blossom which withered in the course of three months, it was your princely father who held it at the font, and celebrated the ceremony of baptism with richer and prouder magnificence, than Paris itself could have afforded. Never shall I forget the deep, the indelible impression which the generosity of Duke Philip, and yours, my dearest cousin,

made upon the half-broken heart of the poor exile!»

« Your Majesty,» said the Duke, compelling himself to make some reply, « acknowledged that slight obligation in terms which overpaid all the display which Burgundy could make, to show due sense of the honour you had done its sovereign.»

« I remember the words you mean, fair cousin,» said the King, smiling; « I think they were, that in guerdon of the benefit of that day, I, poor wanderer, had nothing to offer, save the persons of myself, of my wife, and of my child.—Well, and I think I have indifferently well redeemed my pledge.»

« I mean not to dispute what your Majesty is pleased to aver,» said the Duke; « but——»

« But you ask,» said the King, interrupting him, « how my actions have accorded with my words—Marry thus: the body of my infant child Joachim rests in Burgundian earth—my own person I have this morning placed unreservedly in your power—and, for that of my wife, truly, cousin, I think, considering the period of time which has passed, you will scarce insist on my keeping my word in that particular. She was born on the day of the Blessed Annunciation (he crossed himself, and muttered an *Ora pro nobis*), some fifty years since; but she is no farther distant than Rheims, and if you insist on my promise being fulfilled

to the letter, she shall presently wait your pleasure.»

Angry as the Duke of Burgundy was at the barefaced attempt of the King to assume towards him a tone of friendship and intimacy, he could not help laughing at the whimsical reply of that singular monarch, and his laugh was as discordant as the abrupt tones of passion in which he often spoke. Having laughed longer and louder than was at that time, or would now, be thought fitting the time and occasion, he answered in the same tone, bluntly declining the honour of the queen's company, but stating his willingness to accept that of the King's eldest daughter, whose beauty was celebrated.

« I am happy, fair cousin,» said the King, with one of those dubious smiles of which he frequently made use, « that your gracious pleasure has not fixed on my younger daughter Joan. I should otherwise have had spear-breaking between you and my cousin of Orleans ; and, had harm come of it, I must on either side have lost a kind friend and affectionate cousin.»

« Nay, nay, my royal sovereign,» said Duke Charles, « the Duke of Orleans shall have no interruption from me in the path which he has chosen *par amours*. The cause in which I couch my lance against Orleans must be fair and straight.»

Louis was far from taking amiss this brutal allusion to the personal deformity of the princess Joan. On the contrary, he was rather pleased to find that the Duke was content to be amused with broad jests, in which he was himself a proficient, and which (according to the modern phrase) spared much sentimental hypocrisy. Accordingly, he speedily placed their intercourse on such a footing, that Charles, though he felt it impossibile to play the part of an affectionate and reconciled friend to a monarch whose ill offices he had so often encountered, and whose sincerity on the present occasion he so strongly doubted, yet had no difficulty in acting the hearty landlord towards a facetious guest; and so the want of reciprocity in kinder feelings between them was supplied by the tone of good fellowship which exists between two boon companions,—a tone natural to the Duke from the frankness, and, it might be added, the grossness of his character, and to Louis, because, though capable of assuming any mode of social intercourse, that which really suited him best was mingled with grossness of ideas, and of caustic humour in expression,

Both princes were happily able to preserve, during the period of a banquet at the town-house of Peronne, the same kind of conversation, on which they met as on a neutral ground, and which, as Louis easily perceived,

was more available than any other to keep the Duke of Burgundy in that state of composure which seemed necessary to his own safety.

Yet he was alarmed to observe that the Duke had around him several of those French nobles, and those of the highest rank, and in situations of great trust and power, whom his own severity or injustice had driven into exile; and it was to secure himself from the possible effects of their resentment and revenge, that (as already mentioned) he requested to be lodged in the castle or citadel of Peronne, rather than in the town itself. This was readily granted by Duke Charles, with one of those grim smiles, of which it was impossible to say whether it meant good or harm to the party whom it concerned.

But when the King, expressing himself with as much delicacy as he could, and in the manner he thought best qualified to lull suspicion asleep, asked, whether the Scottish Archers of his guard might not maintain the custody of the castle of Peronne during his residence there, in lieu of the gate of the town which the Duke had offered to their care, Charles replied, with his wonted sternness of voice, and abruptness of manner, rendered more alarming by his habit, when he spoke, of either turning up his moustachios or handling his sword and dagger, the last of which he used

frequently to draw a little way, and then return to the sheath—« Saint Martin! No, my liege. You are in your vassal's camp and city —so men call me in respect to your Majesty —my castle and town are yours; and my men are yours; so it is indifferent whether they or the Scottish Archers guard either the outer gate or defences of the castle.—No, by Saint George! Peronne is a virgin fortress—she shall not lose her reputation by any neglect of mine. Maidens must be carefully watched, my royal cousin, if we would have them continue to live in good fame.»

« Surely, fair cousin, and I altogether agree with you,» said the King, « being, in fact, more interested in the reputation of the good little town than you are—Peronne being, as you know, fair cousin, one of those upon the same river Somme, which, pledged to your father of happy memory for redemption of money, are liable to be redeemed upon re-payment. And, to speak truth, coming, like an honest debtor, disposed to clear off my obligations of every kind, I have brought here a few sumpter mules loaded with silver for the redemption —enough to maintain even your princely and royal establishment, fair cousin, for the space of three years.»

« I will not receive a penny of it, » said the Duke, twirling his moustachios; « the day of redemption is past, my royal cousin; nor was

there ever serious purpose that the right should be exercised, the cession of these towns being the sole recompense my father ever received from France, when, in a happy hour for your family, he consented to forget the murder of my grandfather, and to exchange the alliance of England for that of your father. Saint George! if he had not so acted, your royal self, far from having towns on the Somme, could scarce have kept those beyond the Loire. No—I will not render a stone of them, were I to receive for every stone so rendered its weight in gold. I thank God, and the wisdom and valour of my ancestors, that the revenues of Burgundy, though it be but a duchy, will maintain my state, even when a king is my guest, without obliging me to barter my heritage.»

« Well, fair cousin,» answered the King, with the same mild and placid manner as before, and imperturbed by the muttering and violent gestures of the Duke, « I see that you are so good a friend to France, that you are unwilling to part with aught that belongs to her. But we shall need some moderator in these affairs when we come to treat of them in council—What say you to Saint Paul?»

« Neither Saint Paul, nor Saint Peter, nor e'er a saint in the calendar,» said the Duke of Burgundy, « shall preach me out of possession of Peronne.»

« Nay, but you mistake me,» said King Louis, smiling; « I mean Louis de Luxembourg, our

trusty constable, the count of Saint Paul.— Ah! Saint Mary of Embrun ! we lack but his head at our conference! the best head in France, and the most useful to the restoration of perfect harmony betwixt us.»

« By Saint George of Burgundy!» said the Duke, « I marvel to hear your Majesty talk thus of a man, false and perjured, both to France and Burgundy—one who hath ever endeavoured to fan into a flame our frequent differences, and that with the purpose of giving himself the airs of a mediator. I swear by the order I wear, that his marshes shall not be long a resource for him.»

« Be not so warm, cousin,» said the King, smiling, and speaking under his breath; « when I wished for the constable's *head*, as a means of ending the settlement of our trifling differences, I had no desire for his *body*, which might remain at Saint Quentin's with much convenience.»

« Ho! ho ! I take your meaning, my royal cousin,» said Charles, with the same dissonant laugh which some of the King's coarse pleasantries had extorted; and added, stamping with his heel on the ground, « I allow, in that sense, the head of the constable *might* be useful at Peronne.»

These, and other discourses, by which the King mixed hints at serious affairs amid matter of mirth and amusement, did not follow

each other consecutively; but were adroitly introduced during the time of the banquet at the Hôtel de Ville, during a subsequent interview in the Duke's own apartments, and, in short, as occasion seemed to render the introduction of such delicate subjects easy and natural.

Indeed, however rashly Louis had placed himself in a risk, which the Duke's fiery temper, and the mutual subjects of exasperated enmity which subsisted between them, rendered of doubtful and perilous issue, never pilot on an unknown coast conducted himself with more firmness and prudence. He seemed to sound, with the utmost address and precision, the depths and shallows of his rival's mind and temper, and manifested neither doubt nor fear, when the result of his experiments discovered much more of sunken rocks, and of dangerous shoals, than of safe anchorage.

At length a day closed, which must have been a wearisome one to Louis, from the constant exertion, vigilance, precaution, and attention which his situation required, as it was a day of constraint to the Duke, from the necessity of suppressing the violent feelings to which he was in the general habit of giving uncontrolled vent.

No sooner was the latter retired into his own apartment, after he had taken a formal leave of the King for the night, than he gave way to the

explosion of passion which he had so long suppressed, and many an oath and abusive epithet, as his jester, Le Glorieux, said, « fell that night upon heads which they were never coined for» —his domestics reaping the benefit of that hoard of injurious language which he could not in decency bestow on his royal guest, even in his absence, and which was yet become too great to be altogether suppressed. The jests of the clown had some effect in tranquillizing the Duke's angry mood;—he laughed loudly, threw the jester a piece of gold, caused himself to be disrobed in tranquillity, swallowed a deep cup of wine and spices, went to bed, and slept soundly.

The couchee of King Louis is more worthy of notice than that of Charles; for the violent expression of exasperated and headlong passion, as indeed it belongs more to the brutal than the intelligent part of our nature, has little to interest us, in comparison to the deep workings of a vigorous and powerful mind.

Louis was escorted to the lodgings he had chosen in the castle, or citadel of Peronne, by the chamberlains and harbingers of the Duke of Burgundy, and received at the entrance by a strong guard of archers and men-at-arms.

As he descended from his horse to cross the drawbridge, over a moat of unusual width and depth, he looked on the sentinels, and observed to d'Argenton, who accompanied him,

with other Burgundian nobles, «They wear Saint Andrew's crosses—but not those of my Scottish Archers.»

«You will find them as ready to die in your defence, Sire,» said d'Argenton, whose sagacious ear had detected in the King's tone of speech a feeling, which doubtless Louis would have concealed if he could. «They wear the Saint Andrew's cross as the appendage of the collar of the Golden Fleece, my master the Duke of Burgundy's order.»

«Do I not know it?» said Louis, showing the collar which he himself wore in compliment to his host; «It is one of the dear bonds of fraternity which exist between my kind brother and myself. We are brothers in chivalry, as in spiritual relationship; cousins by birth, and friends by every tie of kind feeling and good neighbourhood.—No farther than the base-court, my noble lords and gentlemen! I can permit your attendance no farther—you have done me enough of grace.»

«We were charged by the Duke,» said Hymbercourt, «to bring your Majesty to your lodging.—We trust, your Majesty will permit us to obey our master's command.»

«In this small matter,» said the King, «I trust you will allow my command to outweigh his, even with you his liege subjects.—I am something indisposed, my lords—something fatigued. Great pleasure hath its toils as well as

pain.—I trust to enjoy your society better to-morrow.—And yours too, Seignor Philip of Argenton—I am told you are the annalist of the time—we that desire to have a name in history, must speak you fair, for men say your pen hath a sharp point, when you will.—Good night, my lords and gentles, to all and each of you.»

The lords of Burgundy retired, much pleased with the grace of Louis's manner, and the artful distribution of his attentions: and the King was left with only one or two of his own personal followers, under the archway of the base-court of the castle of Peronne, looking on the huge tower which occupied one of the angles, being in fact the donjon, or principal keep of the place. This tall, dark, massive building was seen clearly by the same moon which was lighting Quentin Durward betwixt Charleroi and Peronne, which, as the reader is aware, shone with peculiar lustre. The great keep was in form nearly resembling the White Tower in the citadel of London, but still more ancient in its architecture, deriving its date, as was affirmed, from the days of Charlemagne. The walls were of a tremendous thickness, the windows very small, and grated with bars of iron, and the huge clumsy bulk of the building cast a dark and portentous shadow over the whole of the court-yard.

«I am not to be lodged *there*,» the King said,

with a shudder, that had something in it ominous.

«No,» replied the grey-headed seneschal, who attended upon him unbonnetted—«God forbid—your Majesty's apartments are prepared in these lower buildings which are hard by, and in which King John slept two nights before the battle of Poictiers.»

«Hum—that is no lucky omen neither—» muttered the King; «but what of the tower, my old friend? and why should you desire of Heaven that I may not be there lodged?»

«Nay, my gracious liege,» said the seneschal, «I know no evil of the tower at all—only that the sentinels say lights are seen, and strange noises heard in it at night; and there are reasons why that may be the case, for anciently it was used as a state prison, and there are many tales of deeds which have been done in it.»

Louis asked no further questions, for no man was more bound than he to respect the secrets of a prison-house. At the door of the apartments destined for his use, which, though of later date than the tower, were still both ancient and gloomy, stood a small party of his own guard, with their faithful old commander at their head.

«Crawford—my honest and faithful Crawford,» said the King, «where hast thou been to-day?—Are the lords of Burgundy so inhospi-

table as to neglect one of the bravest and most noble gentlemen who ever trode a court?—I saw you not at the banquet.»

«I declined it, my liege,» said Crawford—«times are changed with me. The day has been that I could have ventured a carouse with the best man in Burgundy, and that in the juice of his own grape; but a matter of four pints now flusters me, and I think it concerns your Majesty's service to set in this an example to my callants.»

«Thou art ever prudent,» said the King; «but surely your toil is the less when you have so few men to command?—and a time of festivity requires not so severe self-denial on your part as time of danger.»

«If I have few men to command,» said Crawford, «I have the more need to keep the knaves in fitting condition; and whether this be like to end in feasting or fighting, God and your Majesty know better than old John of Crawford.»

«You surely do not apprehend any danger?» said the King hastily, yet in a whisper.

«Not I,» answered Crawford; «I wish I did; for, as old Earl Tineman used to say, apprehended dangers may be always defended dangers.—The word for the night, if your Majesty pleases?»

«Let it be Burgundy, in honour of our host and of a liquor that you love, Crawford.»

«I will quarrel with neither Duke nor drink, so called,» said Crawford, «providing always that both be sound. A good night to your Majesty.»

«A good night, my trusty Scot,» said the King, and passed on to his apartments.

At the door of his bed-room Le Balafré was placed sentinel. «Follow me hither,» said the King, as he passed him; and the archer accordingly, like a piece of machinery put into motion by an artist, strode after him into the apartment, and remained there fixed, silent, and motionless, attending the royal command.

«Have you heard from that wandering paladin, your nephew?» said the King; «for he hath been lost to us since, like a young knight who had set out upon his first adventures, he sent us home two prisoners as the first fruits of his chivalry.»

«My lord, I heard something of that,» said Balafré; «and I hope your Majesty will believe, that if he hath acted wrongfully, it was in no shape by my precept or example, since I never was so bold an ass as to unhorse any of your Majesty's most illustrious house, better knowing my own condition, and—»

«Be silent on that point,» said the King; «your nephew did his duty in the matter.»

«There indeed,» continued Balafré, «he had the cue from me.—'Quentin,' said I to him, 'whatever comes of it, remember you

belong to the Scottish Archer-guard, and do your duty, whatever comes on't.'»

« I guess he had some such exquisite instructor,» said Louis; «but it concerns me that you answer my question—Have you heard of your nephew of late?—Stand aback, my masters,» he added, addressing the gentlemen of his chamber, « for this concerneth no ears but mine.»

« Surely, please your Majesty,» said Balafré, « I have seen this very evening the groom Charlot, whom my kinsman dispatched from Liege, or some castle of the bishop's which is near it, and where he hath lodged the ladies of Croye in safety.»

« Now Our Lady of Heaven be praised for it!» said the King. « Art thou sure of it?—sure of the good news?»

« As sure as I can be of aught,» said Le Balafré; « the fellow, I think, hath letters for your Majesty from the ładies of Croye.»

« Haste to get them,» said the King—«Give thy harquebuss to one of these knaves—to Oliver—to any one.—Now Our Lady of Embrun be praised! and silver shall be the screen that surrounds her high altar!»

Louis, in this fit of gratitude and devotion, doffed, as usual, his hat, selected from the figures with which it was garnished that which represented his favourite image of the Virgin,

placed it on a table, and, kneeling down, repeated reverently the vow he had made.

The groom, being the first messenger whom Durward had dispatched from Schonwaldt, was now introduced with his letters. They were addressed to the King by the ladies of Croye, and barely thanked him in very cold terms for his courtesy while at his court, and, something more warmly, for having permitted them to retire, and sent them in safety from his dominions; expressions at which Louis laughed very heartily, instead of resenting them. He then demanded of Charlot, with obvious interest, whether they had not sustained some alarm or attack upon the road? Charlot, a stupid fellow, and selected for that quality, gave a very confused account of the affray in which his companion, the Gascon, had been killed, but knew of no other. Again Louis demanded of him, minutely and particularly, the route which the party had taken to Liege; and seemed much interested when he was informed, in reply, that they had, upon approaching Namur, kept the more direct road to Liege, upon the right bank of the Maes, instead of the left bank, as recommended in their route. The King then ordered the man a small present, and dismissed him, disguising the anxiety he had expressed, as if it had only concerned the safety of the ladies of Croye.

Yet the news, though they implied the fai-

lure of one of his own favourite plans, seemed to imply more internal satisfaction on the King's part than he would have probably indicated in a case of brilliant success. He sighed like one whose breast has been relieved from a heavy burthen, muttered his devotional acknowledgments with an air of deep sanctity, raised up his eyes, and hastened to adjust newer and surer schemes of ambition.

With such purpose, Louis ordered the attendance of his astrologer, Martius Galeotti, who appeared with his usual air of assumed dignity, yet not without an uncertainty on his brow, as if he had doubted the King's kind reception. It was, however, favourable, even beyond the warmest which he had ever met with at any former interview. Louis termed him his friend, his father in the sciences—the glass by which a king should look into distant futurity—and concluded by thrusting on his finger a ring of very considerable value. Galeotti, not aware of the circumstances which had thus suddenly raised his character in the estimation of Louis, yet understood his own profession too well to let that ignorance be seen. He received with grave modesty the praises of Louis, which he contended were only due to the nobleness of the science which he practised, a science the rather the more deserving of admiration on account of its working miracles through means of so feeble an

agent as himself; and he and the King took leave, for once much satisfied with each other.

On the astrologer's departure, Louis threw himself into a chair, and, appearing much exhausted, dismissed the rest of his attendants, excepting Oliver alone, who, creeping around with gentle assiduity and noiseless step, assisted him in the task of preparing for repose.

During the time while he received this assistance, the King, unusual to his wont, was so silent and passive, that his attendant was struck by the unusual change in his deportment. The worst minds have often something of good principle in them—banditti show fidelity to their captain, and sometimes a protected and promoted favourite has felt a gleam of sincere interest in the monarch to whom he owed his greatness. Oliver Diable (or by whatever other name he was called expressive of his evil propensities,) was, nevertheless, scarce so completely identified with Satan as not to feel some touch of gratitude for his master in this singular condition, when, as it seemed, his fate was deeply interested, and his strength seemed to be exhausted. After for a short time rendering to the King in silence the usual services paid by a servant to his master at the toilet, the attendant was at length tempted to say, with the freedom which his Sovereign's indulgence had permitted him in such circumstances, «*Tête-Dieu*, Sire, you

seem as if you had lost a battle; and yet I, who was near your Majesty during this whole day, never knew you fight a field so gallantly.»

«A field!» said King Louis, looking up, and assuming his wonted causticity of tone and manner, «*Pasques-Dieu!* my friend Oliver, say I have kept the arena in a bull-fight; for a blinder, and more stubborn, untameable, uncontrollable brute, than our cousin of Burgundy, never existed, save in the shape of a Murcian bull, trained for the bull-feasts.—Well, let it pass—I dodged him bravely. But, Oliver, rejoice with me that my plans in Flanders have not taken effect, whether as concerning these two rambling Princesses of Croye, or in Liege—you understand me.»

«In faith, I do not, Sire,» replied Oliver; «it is impossible for me to congratulate your Majesty on the failure of your favourite schemes, unless you tell me some reason for the change in your own wishes and views.»

«Nay,» answered the King, «there is no change in either in a general view. But, *Pasques-Dieu!* my friend, I have this day learned more of Duke Charles than I before knew. When he was Count de Charolois, in the time of the old Duke Philip and the banished Dauphin of France, we drank, and hunted, and rambled together—and many a wild adventure we have had. And in these days I had a decided advantage over him—like that which a

strong spirit naturally assumes over a weak one. But he has since changed—has become a dogged, daring, assuming, disputatious dogmatist, who nourishes an obvious wish to drive matters to extremities, while he thinks he has the game in his own hands. I was compelled to glide as gently away from each offensive topic, as if I touched red-hot iron. I did but hint at the possibility of these erratic Countesses of Croye, ere they attained Liege (for thither I frankly confessed that, to the best of my belief, they were gone), falling into the hands of some wild snapper upon the frontiers, and, *Pasques-Dieu!* you would have thought I had spoken of sacrilege. It is needless to tell you what he said, and quite enough to say, that I would have held my head's safety very insecure, if in that moment accounts had been brought of the success of thy friend, William with the Beard, in his and thy honest scheme of bettering himself by marriage.»

«No friend of *mine*, if it please your Majesty,» said Oliver—«neither friend nor plan of mine.»

«True, Oliver,» answered the King; «thy plan had been to shave such a bridegroom. Well thou didst wish her as bad a one, when thou didst modestly hint at thyself. However, Oliver, lucky who hath her not; for hang, draw, and quarter, were the most gentle words which my gentle cousin spoke of him who should

wed the young countess vassal, without his most ducal permission.»

« And he is, doubtless, as jealous of any disturbances in the good town of Liege?» asked the favourite.

« As much, or much more so,» replied the King, « as your understanding may easily anticipate; but ever since I resolved on coming hither, my messengers have been in Liege, to repress, for the present, every movement to insurrection; and my very busy and bustling friends, Rouslaer and Pavillon, have orders to be quiet as a mouse until this happy meeting between my cousin and me is over.»

« Judging, then, from your Majesty's account,» said Oliver, drily, « the utmost to be hoped from this meeting is, that it should not make your condition worse?—Surely this is like the crane that thrust her head into the fox's mouth, and was glad to thank her good fortune that it was not bitten off. Yet your Majesty seemed deeply obliged even now to the sage philosopher who encouraged you to play so hopeful a game.»

« No game,» said the King, sharply, « is to be despaired of until it is lost, and that I have no reason to expect it will be in my own case. On the contrary, if nothing occurs to stir the rage of this vindictive madman, I am sure of victory; and surely, I am not a litle obliged to the skill which selected for my agent, as the con-

ductor of the ladies of Croye, a youth whose horoscope so far corresponded with mine, that he hath saved me from danger, even by the disobedience of my own commands, and taking the route which avoided De la Marck's ambuscade.»

«Your Majesty,» said Oliver, «may find many agents who will serve you on these terms.»

«Nay, nay, Oliver,» said Louis, impatiently, «the heathen poet speaks of *vota diis exaudita malignis*,—wishes, that is, which the saints grant to us in their wrath; and such, in the circumstances, would have been the success of William De la Marck's exploit, had it taken place about this time, and while I am in the power of this Duke of Burgundy.—And this my own art foresaw—fortified by that of Galeotti;—that is, I foresaw not the miscarriage of De la Marck's undertaking, but I foresaw that the expedition of yonder Scottish archer should end happily for me—and such has been the issue, though in a manner different from what I expected; for the stars, though they foretel general results, are yet silent on the means by which such are accomplished, being often the very reverse of what we expect, or even desire.—But why talk I of these mysteries to thee, Oliver? who art in so far worse than the very devil, who is thy namesake, since he believes and trembles; whereas thou art an infidel both

to religion and to science, and wilt remain so till thine own destiny is accomplished, which, as thy horoscope and physiognomy alike assure me, will be by the intervention of the gallows.»

«And if it indeed shall be so,» said Oliver, in a resigned tone of voice, «it will be so ordered because I was too grateful a servant not to execute the commands of my royal master.»

Louis burst into his usual sardonic laugh.—«Thou hast broke thy lance on me fairly, Oliver; and, by Our Lady, thou art right, for I defied thee to it. But, prithee, tell me in sadness, dost thou discover any thing in these men's measures towards us which may argue any suspicion of ill usage?»

«My liege,» replied Oliver, «your Majesty, and yonder learned philosopher, look for augury to the stars and heavenly host—I am an earthly reptile, and consider but the things connected with my vocation. But, methinks, there is a lack of that earnest and precise attention on your Majesty, which men show to a welcome guest of a degree so far above them. The Duke, to-night, pleaded weariness, and saw your Majesty not farther than to the street, leaving to the officers of his household the task of conveying you to your lodgings. The rooms here are hastily and carelessly fitted up—the tapestry is hung up awry and in one of the

pieces, as you may observe, the figures are reversed, and stand on their heads, while the trees grow with their roots uppermost.»

«Pshaw! accident, and the effect of hurry,» said the King. «When did you ever know me concerned about such trifles as these?»

«Not on their own account are they worth notice,» said Oliver; «but as intimating the degree of esteem in which the officers of the Duke's household observe your Grace to be held by him. Believe me, that had his desire seemed sincere that your reception should be in all points perfunctorily discharged, the zeal of his people would have made minutes do the work of days—and when,» he added, pointing to the basin and ewer, «was the furniture of your Majesty's toilet of other substances than silver?»

«Nay,» said the King, with a constrained smile, «that last remark, Oliver, is too much in the style of thine own peculiar occupation to be combated by any one.—True it is, that when I was only a refugee, and an exile, I was served upon gold-plate by order of the same Charles, who accounted silver too mean for the Dauphin, though he seems to hold that metal too rich for the King of France. Well, Oliver, we will to bed—Our resolution has been made and executed; there is nothing to be done but to play manfully the game on which

we have entered. I know that my cousin of Burgundy, like other wild bulls, shuts his eyes when he begins his career. I have but to watch that moment, like one of the *tauridors* whom we saw at Burgos, and his impetuosity places him at my mercy.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EXPLOSION.

'T is listening fear, and dumb amazement all,
When, to the startled eye, the sudden glance
Appears far south, eruptive through the cloud.

THOMSON'S *Summer*.

THE preceding chapter, agreeable to its title, was designed as a retrospect which might enable the reader fully to understand the terms upon which the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy stood together, when the former, moved, partly perhaps by his belief in astrology, which was represented as favourable to the issue of such a measure, and in a great measure doubtless by the conscious superiority of his own powers of mind over those of Charles, had adopted the extraordinary, and upon any other ground altogether inexplicable resolution, of committing his person to the faith of a fierce and exasperated enemy—a resolution also the more rash and unaccountable, as there were various examples in that stormy time to show, that safe-conducts, however solemnly

plighted, had proved no assurance for those in whose favour they were conceived; and indeed the murder of the Duke's grandfather, at the bridge of Montereau, in presence of the father of Louis, and at an interview solemnly agreed upon for the establishment of peace and amnesty, was a horrible precedent, should the Duke be disposed to resort to it.

But the temper of Charles, though rough, fierce, headlong, and unyielding, was not, unless in the full tide of passion, faithless or ungenerous, faults which usually belong to colder dispositions. He was at no pains to show the King more courtesy than the laws of hospitality positively demanded; but, on the other hand, he evinced no purpose of overleaping their sacred barriers.

Upon the next morning after the King's arrival, there was a general muster of the troops of the Duke of Burgundy, which were so numerous, and so excellently appointed, that perhaps, he was not sorry to have an opportunity of displaying them before his great rival. Indeed, while he paid the necessary compliment of a vassal to his suzerain, in declaring that these troops were the King's and not his own, the curl of his upper lip, and the proud glance of his eye, intimated his consciousness, that the words he used were but empty compliment, and that this fine army, at his own unlimited disposal, was as ready to march

against Paris as in any other direction. It must have added to Louis's mortification, that he recognized, as forming part of this host, many banners of French nobility, not only of Normandy and Bretagne, but of provinces more immediately subjected to his own authority, who, from various causes of discontent, had joined and made common cause with the Duke of Burgundy.

True to his character, however, Louis seemed to take little notice of these malcontents, while, in fact, he was revolving in his mind the various means by which it might be possible to detach them from the banners of Burgundy and bring them back to his own, and resolved, for that purpose, that he would cause the principals among them to be secretly sounded by Oliver and other agents.

He himself laboured diligently, but at the same time cautiously, to make interest with the Duke's chief officers and advisers, employing for that purpose the usual means of familiar and frequent notice, adroit flattery, and liberal presents; not, as he represented, to alienate their faithful services from their noble master, but that they might lend their aid in preserving peace betwixt France and Burgundy, an end so excellent in itself, and so obviously tending to the welfare of both countries, and of the reigning princes of either.

The notice of so great and so wise a King

was in itself a mighty bribe; promises did much, and direct gifts, which the customs of the time permitted the Burgundian courtiers to accept without scruple, did still more. During a boar-hunt in the forest, while the Duke, eager always upon the immediate object, whether business or pleasure, gave himself entirely up to the ardour of the chace, Louis, unrestrained by his presence, sought and found the means of speaking secretly and separately to many of those who were reported to have most interest with Charles, among whom Hymbercourt and d'Argenton were not forgotten; nor did he fail to mix up the advances which he made towards those two distinguished persons with praises of the valour and military skill of the former, and of the profound sagacity and literary talents of the future historian of the period.

Such an opportunity of personally conciliating, or, if the reader pleases, corrupting, the ministers of Charles, was perhaps what the King had proposed to himself as a principal object of his visit, even if his art should fail to cajole the Duke himself. The connexion betwixt France and Burgundy was so close, that most of the nobles belonging to the latter country had hopes or actual interests connected with the former, which the favour of Louis could advance, or his personal displeasure destroy. Formed for this and every

other species of intrigue, liberal to profusion when it was necessary to advance his plans, and skilful in putting the most plausible colour upon his proposals and presents, the King contrived to reconcile the spirit of the proud to their profit, and to hold out to the real or pretended patriot the good of both France and Burgundy, as the ostensible motive; whilst the party's own private interest, like the concealed wheel of some machine, worked not the less powerfully that its operations were kept out of sight. For each man he had a suitable bait, and a proper mode of presenting it; he poured the guerdon into the sleeve of those who were too high to extend their hand, and trusted that his bounty, though it descended like the dew without noise and imperceptibly, would not fail to produce, in due season, a plentiful crop of good-will at least, perhaps of good offices to the donor. In fine, although he had been long paving the way by his ministers for an establishment of such an interest in the court of Burgundy, as should be advantageous to the interests of France, Louis's own personal exertions, directed doubtless by the information of which he was previously possessed, did more to accomplish that object in a few hours, than his agents had effected in years of negotiation.

One man alone the King missed, whom he had been particularly desirous of conciliating, and that was the Count de Crevecœur, whose

firmness, during his conduct as envoy at Plessis, far from exciting Louis's resentment, had been viewed as a reason for making him his own if possible. He was not particularly gratified when he learnt that the count, at the head of a hundred lances, was gone towards the frontiers of Brabant, to assist the bishop, in case of necessity, against William de la Marck and his discontented subjects; but he consoled himself, that the appearance of this force, joined with directions which he had sent by faithful messengers, would serve to prevent any premature disturbances in that country, the breaking out of which might, he foresaw, render his present situation very precarious.

The court upon this occasion dined in the forest when the hour of noon arrived, as was common in these great hunting-parties; an arrangement on this occasion particularly agreeable to the Duke, desirous as he was to abridge that ceremonious and deferential solemnity with which he was otherwise under the necessity of receiving King Louis. In fact, the King's knowledge of human nature had in one particular misled him on this remarkable occasion. He thought that the Duke would have been inexpressibly flattered to have received such a mark of condescension and confidence from his liege lord; but he forgot that the dependence of this dukedom upon the Crown of France was privately the subject of galling

mortification to a prince so powerful, so wealthy, and so proud as Charles, whose aim it certainly was to establish an independent kingdom. The presence of the King at his own court imposed on him the necessity of exhibiting himself in the subordinate character of a vassal, and of discharging many rites of feudal observance and deference, which, to one of his haughty disposition, resembled derogation from the character of a sovereign prince, which on all occasions he affected as far as possible to sustain.

But although it was possible to put over the dinner upon the green turf, with sound of bugles, broaching of barrels, and all the freedom of a sylvan meal, it was necessary that the evening repast should, even for that very reason, be held with higher than usual solemnity.

Previous orders for this purpose had been given, and, upon returning to Peronne, King Louis found a banquet, prepared with such a profusion of splendour and magnificence, as became the wealth of his formidable vassal, possessed as he was of almost all the Low Countries, then the richest portion of Europe. At the head of the long board, which groaned under plate of gold and silver, filled to profusion with the most exquisite dainties, sate the Duke, and on his right hand, upon a seat more elevated than his own, was placed his royal guest. Behind him stood on one side the son

of the Duke of Gueldres, who officiated as his grand carver—on the other, Le Glorieux, his jester, without whom he seldom stirred; for, like most men of his hasty and coarse character, Charles carried to extremity the general taste of that age for court-fools and jesters—finding that pleasure in their display of eccentricity and mental infirmity, which his more acute, but not more benevolent rival, loved better to extract from marking the imperfections of humanity in its nobler specimens, and finding subject for mirth in the « fears of the brave and follies of the wise.» And indeed, if an anecdote related by Brantôme be true, that a court-fool, having overheard Louis, in one of his agonies of repentant devotion, confess his accession to the poisoning of his brother, Henry Count of Guyenne, divulged it next day at dinner before the assembled court, that monarch might be supposed rather more than satisfied with the pleasantries of professed jesters for the rest of his life.

But, on the present occasion, Louis neglected not to take notice of the favourite jester of the Duke, and to applaud his repartees; which he did the rather, that he thought he saw that the folly of Le Glorieux, however grossly it was sometimes displayed, covered more than the usual quantity of shrewd and caustic observation proper to his class.

In fact, Tiel Wetzweiler, called Le Glorieux,

was by no means a jester of the common stamp. He was a tall, fine-looking man, excellent at many exercises, which seemed scarce reconcileable with mental imbecility, because it must have required patience and attention to acquire them. He usually followed the Duke to the chace and to the fight; and at Montléhry, when he was in considerable personal danger, wounded in the throat, and likely to be made prisoner by a French knight who had hold of his horse's rein, Tiel Wetzweiler charged the assailant so forcibly, as to overthrow him and disengage his master. Perhaps he was afraid of this being thought too serious a service for a person of his condition, and that it might excite him enemies among those knights and nobles, who had left the care of their master's person to the court-fool. At any rate, he chose rather to be laughed at than praised for his achievement, and made such gasconading boasts of his exploits in the battle, that most men thought the rescue of Charles was as ideal as the rest of his tale; and it was on this occasion he acquired the title of Le Glorieux, by which he was ever afterwards distinguished.

Le Glorieux was dressed very richly, but with little of the usual distinction of his profession, and that little rather of a symbolical than a very literal character. His head was not shorn; on the contrary, he wore a profusion of curled hair, which descended from under his

cap, and, joining with a well-arranged and handsomely trimmed beard, set off features, which, but for a wild lightness of eye, might have been termed handsome. A ridge of scarlet velvet carried across the top of his cap, indicated, rather than positively represented, the professional coxcomb, which distinguished the head-gear of a fool in right of office. His bauble, made of ebony, was crested, as usual, with a fool's head, with ass's ears formed of silver, but so small, and so minutely carved, that, till very closely examined, it might have passed for an official baton of more solemn character. These were the only badges of his office which his dress exhibited. In other respects, it was such as to match with that of the most courtly nobles. His bonnet displayed a medal of gold : he wore a chain of the same metal around his neck, and the fashion of his rich garments was not much more fantastic than those of young gallants who have their clothes made in the extremity of the existing fashion.

To this personage Charles, and Louis, in imitation of his host, often addressed themselves during the entertainment; and both seemed to manifest, by hearty laughter, their amusement at the answers of Le Glorieux.

« Whose seats be those that are vacant? » said Charles to the jester.

« One of those at least should be mine by

right of succession, Charles,» replied the jester.

«Why so, knave?» said Charles.

«Because they belong to the Sieur d'Hymbercourt and d'Argenton, who are gone so far to fly their falcons, that they have forgot their supper. They, who would rather look at a kite on the wing than a pheasant on the board, are of kin to the fool, and he should succeed to the stools, as a part of their moveable estate.»

«That is but a stale jest, my friend Tiel,» said the Duke; «but, fools or wise men, here come the defaulters.»

As he spoke, d'Argenton and d'Hymbercourt entered the room, and, after having made their reverence to the two princes, assumed in silence the seats which were left vacant for them.

«What, ho! sirs,» exclaimed the Duke, addressing them, «your sport has been either very good or very bad, to lead you so far and so late. Sir Philip de Comines, you are dejected —hath d'Hymbercourt won so heavy a wager on you?—you are a philosopher, and should not grieve at bad fortune.—By Saint George! d'Hymbercourt looks as sad as thou doest.—How now, sirs? Have you found no game, or have you lost your falcons? or has a witch crossed your way? or has the Wild Huntsman met you in the forest? By my honour, you

seem as if you were come to a funeral, not a festival.»

While the Duke spoke, the eyes of the company were all directed towards d'Hymbercourt and d'Argenton; and the embarrassment and dejection of their countenances, neither being of that class of persons to whom such expression of anxious melancholy was natural, became so remarkable, that the mirth and the laughter of the company, which the rapid circulation of goblets of excellent wine had raised to a considerable height, was gradually hushed; and, without being able to assign any reason for such a change in their spirits, men spoke in whispers to each other, as on the eve of expecting some strange and important tidings.

« What means this silence, messires?» said the Duke, elevating his voice, which was naturally harsh. « If you bring these strange looks, and this stranger silence, into festivity, we shall wish you had abode in the marshes seeking for herons, or rather for woodcocks and owlets.»

« My gracious lord,» said d'Argenton, « as we were about to return hither from the forest, we met the Count of Crevecœur.»

« How!» said the Duke; «already returned from Brabant?—but he found all well there, doubtless!—»

« The count himself will presently give your grace an account of his news,» said d'Hymber-

court, « which we have heard but imperfectly. »

« Body of me, where is the count? » said the Duke.

« He changes his dress, to wait upon your Highness, » answered d'Hymbercourt.

« His dress? Saint-bleu! » exclamed the impatient prince, « what care I for his dress? I think you have conspired with him to drive me mad. »

« Or rather, to be plain, » said d'Argenton, « he wishes to communicate these news at a private audience. »

« *Teste-Dieu!* my Lord King, » said Charles, « this is ever the way our counsellors serve us —If they have got hold of aught which they consider as important for our ear, they look as grave upon the matter, and are as proud of their burthen as an ass of a new pack-saddle. —Some one bid Crevecœur come to us directly! —He comes from the frontiers of Liege, and *we*, at least (he laid some emphasis on the pronoun), have no secrets in that quarter which we would shun to have proclaimed before the assembled world. »

All perceived that the Duke had drunk so much wine as to increase the native obstinacy of his disposition; and though many would willingly have suggested that the present was neither a time for hearing news, or for taking counsel, yet all knew the impetuosity of his temper too well to venture on further interfe-

rence, and sate in anxious expectation of the tidings which the count might have to communicate.

A brief interval intervened, during which the Duke remained looking eagerly to the door, as if in a transport of impatience, while the guests sate with their eyes bent on the table, as if to conceal their curiosity and anxiety. Louis alone maintaining perfect composure, continued his conversation alternately with the grand carver and with the jester.

At length Crevecœur entered, and was presently saluted by the hurried question of his master, « What news from Liege and Brabant, Sir Count?—The report of your arrival has chased mirth from our table—we hope your actual presence will bring it back to us. »

« My liege and master, » answered the count, in a firm, but melancholy tone, « the news which I bring you are fitter for the council-board than the feasting-table. »

« Out with them, man, if they were tidings from Antichrist, » said the Duke; « but I can guess them—the Liegeois are again in mutiny. »

« They are, my lord, » said Crevecœur, very gravely.

« Look there, man, » said the Duke, « I have hit at once on what you have been so much afraid to mention to me—the hair-brained burghers are again in arms. It could not be

in better time, for we may at present have the advice of our own suzerain,» bowing to King Louis, with eyes which spoke the most bitter, though suppressed resentment,» to teach us how such mutineers should be dealt with.—Hast thou more news in thy packet? Out with them, and then answer for yourself why you went not forward to assist the bishop.»

« My lord, the further tidings are heavy for me to tell, and will be afflicting to you to hear. —No aid of mine, or of living chivalry, could have availed the excellent prelate. William de la Marck, united with the insurgent Liegeois, has taken his castle of Schonwaldt, and murdered him in his own hall.»

« *Murdered him !*» repeated the Duke, in a deep and low tone, but which nevertheless was heard from the one end of the hall in which they were assembled to the other ; « thou hast been imposed upon, Crevecœur, by some wild report—it is impossible.»

« Alas ! my lord,» said the count, « I have it from an eye-witness, an archer of the King of France's Scottish Guard, who was in the hall when the murder was committed by William de la Marck's order.»

« And who was doubtless aiding and abetting in the horrible sacrilege,» said the Duke, starting up and stamping with his foot with such fury, that he dashed in pieces the foot-stool which was placed before him. « Bar

the doors of this hall, gentlemen—secure the windows—let no stranger stir from his seat, upon pain of instant death!—Gentlemen of my chamber draw your swords.» And turning upon Louis, he advanced his own hand slowly and deliberately to the hilt of his weapon, while the King, without either showing fear or assuming a defensive posture, only said, « These news, fair cousin, have staggered your reason.»

« No! » replied the Duke, in a terrible tone, « but they have awakened a just resentment, which I have too long suffered to be stifled by trivial considerations of circumstance and place. Murderer of thy brother!—rebel against thy parent!—tyrant over thy subjects!—treacherous ally!—perjured King!—dishonoured gentleman!—thou art in my power, and I thank God for it!»

« Rather thank my folly,» said the King; «for when we met on equal terms at Montlhéry, methinks you wished yourself farther from me than we are now.»

The Duke still held his hand on the hilt of his sword, but refrained to draw his weapon, or to strike a foe, who offered no sort of resistance which could in anywise provoke violence.

Meantime, wild and general confusion spread itself through the hall. The doors were now fastened and guarded at the order of the Duke; but several of the French nobles, few

as they were in number, started from their seats, and prepared for the defence of their Sovereign. Louis had spoken not a word either to Orleans or Dunois since they were liberated from restraint at the Castle of Loches, if it could be termed liberation to be dragged in King Louis's train, objects of suspicion evidently, rather than of respect and regard; but, nevertheless, the voice of Dunois was first heard above the tumult, addressing himself to the Duke of Burgundy.—« Sir Duke, you have forgotten that you are a vassal of France, and that we, your guests, are Frenchmen. If you lift a hand against our Monarch, prepare to sustain the utmost effects of our despair; for credit me, we shall feast as high with the blood of Burgundy as we have done with its wine.—Courage, my Lord of Orleans—and you, gentlemen of France, form yourselves round Dunois, and do as he does!»

It was in that moment when a King might see upon what tempers he could certainly rely. The few independent nobles and knights who attended Louis, most of whom had only received from him frowns or discountenance, unappalled by the display of infinitely superior force, and the certainty of destruction, hastened to array themselves around Dunois, and, led by him, to press towards the head of the table, where the contending princes were seated.

On the contrary, the tools and agents whom Louis had dragged forward out of their fitting places, into importance which was not due to them, showed cowardice and cold heart, and, remaining still in their seats, seemed resolved not to provoke their fate by intermeddling, whatever might become of their benefactor.

The first of the more generous party was the venerable Lord Crawford, who, with an agility which no one would have expected at his years, forced his way through all opposition (which was the less violent, as many of the Burgundians, either from a point of honour, or a secret inclination to prevent Louis's impending fate, gave way to him), and threw himself boldly between the King and Duke. He then placed his bonnet, from which his white hair escaped in dishevelled tresses, upon one side of his head—his pale cheek and withered brow coloured, and his aged eye lightened with all the fire of a gallant who is about to dare some desperate action. His cloak was flung over one shoulder, and his action intimated his readiness to wrap it about his left arm, while he unsheathed his sword with his right.

« I have fought for his father and his grandsire,» that was all he said, « and by Saint Andrew, end the matter as it will, I will not fail him at this pinch.»

What has taken some time to narrate happened in fact, with the speed of light; for so soon as the Duke assumed his threatening posture, Crawford had thrown himself betwixt him and the object of his vengeance; and the French gentlemen, drawing together as fast as they could, were crowding to the same point.

The Duke of Burgundy still remained with his hand on his sword, and seemed in the act of giving the signal for a general onset, which must necessarily have ended in the massacre of the weaker party, when Crevecœur rushed forward, and exclaimed, in a voice like a trumpet,—« My liege Lord of Burgundy, beware what you do ! This is *your* hall—you are the King's vassal—do not spill the blood of your guest on your hearth, the blood of your Sovereign on the throne you have erected for him, and to which he came under your safeguard. For the sake of your house's honour, do not attempt to revenge one horrid murder by another yet worse !»

« Out of my road, Crevecœur,» answered the Duke, « and let my vengeance pass !—Out of my path !—The wrath of Kings is to be dreaded like that of Heaven.»

« Only when, like that of Heaven, it is *just*,» answered Crevecœur, firmly—« Let me pray of you, my lord, to rein the violence of your temper, however justly offended.—And for

you, my lords of France, where resistance is unavailing, let me recommend you to forbear whatever may lead towards bloodshed.»

«He is right,» said Louis, whose coolness forsook him not in that dreadful moment, and who easily foresaw, that if a brawl should commence, more violence would be dared and done in the heat of blood, than was like to be attempted if peace were preserved.—«My cousin Orleans—kind Dunois—and you, my trusty Crawford—bring not on ruin and bloodshed by taking offence too hastily. Our cousin the Duke is chafed at tidings of the death of a near and loving friend, the venerable Bishop of Liege, whose slaughter we lament as he does. Ancient, and, unhappily, recent subjects of jealousy, lead him to suspect us of having abetted a crime which our bosom abhors. Should our host murder us on this spot—us, his King and his kinsman, under a false impression of our being accessories to this unhappy accident, our fate will be little lightened, but, on the contrary, greatly aggravated by your stirring.—Therefore, stand back, Crawford—Were it my last word, I speak as a King to his officer, and demand obedience—Stand back, and, if it is required, yield up your sword. I command you to do so, and your oath obliges you to obey.»

«True, true, my lord,» said Crawford, stepping back, and returning to the sheath the

blade he had half-drawn, « It may be all very true; but, by my honour, if I were at the head of threescore and ten of my brave fellows, instead of being loaded with more than the like number of years, I would try whether I would have some reason out of these fine gallants, with their golden chains and looped-up bonnets, with braw-warld dyes and devices on them.»

The Duke stood with his eyes fixed on the ground for a considerable space, and then said, with bitter irony, « Crevecœur, you say well; and it concerns our honour, that our obligations to this great King, our honoured and loving guest, be not so hastily adjusted, as in our hasty anger we had at first purposed. We will so act, that all Europe shall acknowledge the justice of our proceedings.—Gentlemen of France, you must render up your arms to my officers! Your master has broken the truce, and has no title to take further benefit of it. In compassion, however, to your sentiments of honour, and in respect to the rank which he hath disgraced, and the race from which he hath degenerated, we ask not our cousin Louis's sword.»

« Not one of us,» said Dunois, « will resign our weapon, or quit this hall, unless we are assured of at least our King's safety, in life and limb.»

« Nor will a man of the Scottish Guard,» ex-

claimed Crawford, « lay down his arms, save at the command of the King of France, or his high constable.»

« Brave Dunois,» said Louis, « and you, my trusty Crawford, your zeal will do me injury instead of benefit.—I trust,» he added with dignity, « in my rightful cause, more than in a vain resistance, which would but cost the lives of my best and bravest.—Give up your swords —the noble Burgundians, who accept such honourable pledges, will be more able than you are to protect both you and me.—Give up your swords—It is I who command you.»

It was thus that, in this dreadful emergency, Louis showed the promptitude of decision, and clearness of judgment, which alone could have saved his life. He was aware that, until actual blows were exchanged, he would have the assistance of most of the nobles present to moderate the fury of their prince; but that were a *mêlée* once commenced, he himself and his few adherents must be instantly murdered. At the same time his worst enemies confessed, that his demeanour had in it nothing either of meanness, or cowardice. He shunned to aggravate into frenzy the wrath of the Duke; but he neither deprecated nor seemed to fear it, and continued to look on him with the calm and fixed attention with which a brave man eyes the menacing gestures of a lunatic, whilst conscious that his own steadiness and compo-

sure operate as an insensible and powerful check on the rage even of insanity.

Crawford, at the King's command, threw his sword to Crevecœur, saying, « Take it! and the devil give you joy of it.—It is no dishonour to the rightful owner who yields it, for we have had no fair play.»

« Hold, gentlemen,» said the Duke, in a broken voice, as one whom passion had almost deprived of utterance, « Retain your swords; it is sufficient you promise not to use them—And you, Louis of Valois, must regard yourself as my prisoner, until you are cleared of having abetted sacrilege and murder. Have him to the castle—Have him to Earl Herbert's Tower. Let him have six gentlemen of his train to attend him, such as he shall chuse.—My Lord of Crawford, your Guard must leave the castle, and shall be honourably quartered elsewhere.—Up with every drawbridge, and down with every portcullis—Let the gates of the town be trebly guarded—Draw to the right-hand side of the river the floating-bridge—Bring round the castle my band of Black Walloons, and treble the sentinels on every post!—You, d'Hymbercourt, look that patroles of horse and foot make round of the town every half-hour during the night, and every hour during the next day,—if indeed such ward shall be necessary after day-break, for it is like we may be sudden in this matter.—

Look to the person of Louis, as you love your life!»

He started from the table in fierce and moody haste, darted a glance of mortal enmity at the King, and rushed out of the apartment.

«Sirs,» said the King, looking with dignity around him, «grief for the death of his ally hath made your prince frantic. I trust you know better your duty, as knights and noblemen, than to abet him in his treasonable violence against the person of his liege lord.»

At this moment was heard in the streets the sound of drums beating, and horns blowing, to call out the soldiery in every direction.

«We are,» said Crevecœur, who acted as the marshal of the Duke's household, «subjects of Burgundy, and must do our duty as such. Our hopes and prayers, and our efforts, will not be wanting to bring about peace and union between your Majesty and our liege lord. Meantime, we must obey his commands. These other lords and knights will be proud to contribute to the convenience of the illustrious Duke of Orleans, of the brave Dunois, and the stout Lord Crawford. I myself must be your Majesty's chamberlain and bring you to your apartments in other guise than would be my desire, remembering the hospitality of Plessis. You have only to chuse your attendants, whom the Duke's commands limit to six.»

«Then,» said the King, looking around him, and thinking for a moment,—«I desire the attendance of Oliver le Dain, of a private of my Life-guard, called Balafré, who may be unarmed if you will—Of Tristan l'Hermite, with two of his people—and my right loyal and trusty philosopher, Martius Galeotti.»

«Your Majesty's will shall be complied with in all points,» said the Count de Crevecœur. «Galeotti,» he added, after a moment's inquiry, «is, I understand, at present supping in some buxom company, but he shall instantly be sent for; the others will obey your Majesty's command upon the instant.»

«Forward, then, to the new abode, which the hospitality of our cousin provides for us,» said the King. «We know it is strong, and have only to hope it may be in a corresponding degree safe.»

«Heard you the choice which King Louis has made of his attendants?» said Le Glorieux to Count Crevecœur apart, as they followed Louis from the hall.

«Surely, my merry gossip,» replied the count,—«What hast thou to object to them?»

«Nothing, nothing—only they are a rare election!—A pandarly barber—a Scotch hired cut-throat—a chief hangman and his two assistants, and a thieving charlatan.—I will along with you, Crevecœur, and take a lesson in the degrees of roguery, from observing your skill

in marshalling them. The devil himself could scarce have summoned such a synod, or have been a better president amongst them.»

Accordingly, the all-licensed jester, seizing the count's arm familiarly, began to march along with him, while, under strong guard, yet forgetting no semblance of respect, he conducted the King towards his new apartment.

CHAPTER V.

UNCERTAINTY.

——Then, happy low, lie down,
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

Henry IV.—Part second.

FORTY men-at-arms, carrying alternately naked swords and blazing torches, served as the escort, or rather the guard, of King Louis, from the town-hall of Peronne to the castle; and as he entered within its darksome and gloomy strength, it seemed as if a voice screamed in his ear that warning which the Florentine has inscribed over the portal of the infernal regions, « Leave all hope behind.»

At that moment, perhaps, some feeling of remorse might have crossed the King's mind, had he thought on the hundreds, nay thousands, whom, without cause or on light suspicion, he had committed to the abysses of his dungeons, deprived of all hope of liberty, and loathing even the life to which they clung by animal instinct.

The broad glare of the torches outfacing the pale moon, which was more obscured on this than on the former night, and the red smoky light which they dispersed around the ancient buildings, gave a darker shade to that huge donjon, called the Earl Herbert's Tower. It was the same which Louis had viewed with misgiving presentiment on the preceding evening, and of which he was now doomed to become an inhabitant, under the terror of what violence soever the wrathful temper of his overgrown vassal might tempt him to exercise in those secret recesses of despotism.

To aggravate the King's painful feelings, he saw, as he crossed the court-yard, one or two bodies, over each of which had been hastily flung a military cloak. He was not long of discerning that they were corpses of slain Archers of the Scottish Guard, who having disputed, as the Count of Crevecœur informed him, the command given them to quit the post near the King's apartments, a brawl had ensued between them and the Duke's Walloon Body-guards, and, before it could be composed by the officers on either side, several lives had been lost.

« My trusty Scots! » said the King, as he looked upon this melancholy spectacle; « had they brought only man to man, all Flanders, and Burgundy to boot, had not furnished champions to mate you. »

«Ay, an it please your Majesty,» said Balafré, who attended close behind the King, «Maistery mows the meadow—few men can fight more than two at once.—I myself never care to meet three, unless it be in the way of special duty, when one must not stand to count heads.»

«Art thou there, old acquaintance?» said the King, looking behind him; «then I have one true subject with me yet.»

«And a faithful minister, whether in your councils, or in his offices about your royal person,» whispered Oliver le Dain.

«We are all faithful,» said Tristan l'Hermite, gruffly; «for should they put to death your Majesty, there is not one of us whom they would suffer to survive you, even if we would.»

«Now, that is what I call good corporal bail for fidelity,» said Le Glorieux, who, as already mentioned, with the restlessness proper to an infirm brain, had thrust himself into their company.

Meanwhile, the seneschal, hastily summoned, was turning with laborious effort the ponderous key which opened the reluctant gate of the huge Gothic keep, and was at last fain to call on the assistance of one of Crevecœur's attendants. When they had succeeded, six men entered with torches, and showed the way through a narrow and winding passage, com-

manded at different points by shot-holes from vaults and casements constructed behind, and in the thickness of the massive walls. At the end of this passage, arose a stair of corresponding rudeness, consisting of huge blocks of stone, roughly dressed with the hammer, and of unequal height. Having mounted this ascent, a strong iron-clenched door admitted them to what had been the great hall of the donjon, lighted but very faintly even during the day-time (for the apertures, diminished in appearance by the excessive thickness of the walls, resembled slits rather than windows), and now, but for the blaze of the torches, almost perfectly dark. Two or three bats, and other birds of evil presage, roused by the unusual glare, flew against the lights, and threatened to extinguish them; while the seneschal formally apologized to the King, that the state-hall had not been put in order, such was the hurry of the notice sent to him; and adding that, in truth, the apartment had not been in use for twenty years, and rarely before that time, so far as ever he had heard, since the time of King Charles the Simple.

« King Charles the Simple! » echoed Louis; « I know the history of the tower now.—He was here murdered by his treacherous vassal, Herbert, Earl of Vermandois—so say our annals. I knew there was something concerning the castle of Peronne which dwelt on my

mind, though I could not recal the circumstance.—*Here*, then, my predecessor was slain!»

« Not here, not exactly here, an please your Majesty,» said the old seneschal, stepping with the eager haste of a cicerone, who shows the curiosities of such a place—«Not *here*, but in the side-chamber a little onward, which opens from your Majesty's bed-chamber.»

He hastily opened a wicket at the upper end of the hall, which led into a bed-chamber, small, as is usual in these old buildings; but, even for that reason, rather more comfortable than the waste hall through which they had passed. Some hasty preparations had been here made for the King's accommodation. Arras had been tacked up, a fire lighted in the rusty grate, which had been long unused, and a pallet laid down for those gentlemen who were to pass the night in his chamber, as was then usual.

« We will get beds in the hall for the rest of your attendants; but we have had such brief notice, if it please your Majesty — And if it please your Majesty to look upon this little wicket behind the arras, it opens into the little old cabinet, in the thickness of the wall, where Charles was slain; and there is a secret passage from below, which admitted the men who were to deal with him. And your Majesty, whose eye-sight I hope is better than mine,

may see the blood still on the oak-floor, though the thing was done five hundred years ago.»

While he thus spoke, he kept fumbling to open the postern of which he spoke, until the King said, «Forbear, old man—forbear but a little while, when thou mayst have a newer tale to tell, and fresher blood to show.—My Lord of Crevecœur, what say you?»

«I can but answer, Sire, that these two interior apartments are as much at your Majesty's disposal as those in your own castle of Plessis, and that Crevecœur, a name never blackened by treachery or assassination, has the guard of the exterior defences of it.»

«But the private passage into that closet, of which the old man speaks?» This King Louis said in a low and anxious tone, holding Crevecœur's arm fast with one hand, and pointing to the wicket-door with the other.

«It is but some dream of Mornay's,» said Crevecœur, «or some old and absurd tradition of the place;—but we will examine.»

He was about to open the closet door, when Louis answered, «No, Crevecœur, no—Your honour is sufficient warrant.—But what will your Duke do with me, Crevecœur? He cannot hope to keep me long a prisoner; and—in short, give me your opinion, Crevecœur.»

«My Lord and Sire,» said the count, «how the Duke of Burgundy must resent this horrible cruelty on the person of his near relative and

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ally, is for your Majesty to judge; and what right he may have to consider it as instigated by your Majesty's emissaries, you only can know. But my master is noble in his dispositions, and made incapable, even by the very strength of his passions, of any underhand practices. Whatever he does, will be done in the face of day, and of the two nations. And I can but add, that it will be the wish of every counsellor around him—excepting perhaps one—that he should behave in this matter with mildness and generosity, as well as justice.»

«Ah! Crevecœur,» said Louis, taking his hand as if affected by some painful recollections, «how happy is the prince who has counsellors near him, who can guard him against the effects of his own angry passions! Their names will be read in golden letters, when the history of his reign is perused.—Noble Crevecœur, had it been my lot to have such as thou art about *my* person!»

«It had in that case been your Majesty's study to have got rid of them as fast as you could,» said Le Glorieux.

«Aha! Sir Wisdom, art thou there?» said Louis, turning round, and instantly changing the pathetic tone in which he had addressed Crevecœur, and adopting with facility one which had a turn of gaiety in it—«Hast *thou* followed us hither?»

«Ay, Sir,» answered Le Glorieux, «Wisdom must follow in motley, where Folly leads the way in purple.»

«How shall I construe that, Sir Solomon,» answered Louis—«Wouldst thou change conditions with me?»

«Not I, by my halidome,» quoth Le Glorieux, «if you would give me fifty crowns to boot.»

«Why, wherefore so?—Methinks I could be well enough contented, as princes go, to have thee for my King.»

«Ay, Sire,» replied Le Glorieux; «but the question is, whether, judging of your Majesty's wit from its having lodged you here, I should not have cause to be ashamed of having so dull a fool.»

«Peace, sirrah,» said the Count of Crevecœur; «your tongue runs too fast.»

«Let it take its course,» said the King; «I know of no such fair subject of raillery, as the follies of those who should know better.—Here, my sagacious friend, take this purse of gold, and with it the advice, never to be so great a fool as to deem yourself wiser than other people. Prithee, do me so much favour, as to inquire after my astrologer, Martius Galeotti, and send him hither to me presently.»

«I will, without fail, my liege,» answered the jester; «and I wot well I shall find him at Jan Doppletbur's, for philosophers, as well as fools, know where the best wine is sold.»

«Let me pray for free entrance for this learned person through your guards, Seignor de Crevecœur,» said Louis.

«For his entrance, unquestionably,» answered the count; «but it grieves me to add, that my instructions do not authorize me to permit any one to quit your Majesty's apartments.—I wish your Majesty a good night,» he subjoined, «and will presently make such arrangements in the outer hall, as may put the gentlemen who are to inhabit it, more at their ease.»

«Give yourself no trouble for them, Sir Count,» replied the King, «they are men accustomed to set hardships at defiance; and to speak truth, excepting that I wish to see Galeotti, I would desire as little further communication from without this night as may be consistent with your instructions.»

«These are to leave your Majesty,» replied Crevecœur, «undisputed possession of your own apartments. Such are my master's orders.»

«Your master, Count Crevecœur,» answered Louis, «whom I may also term mine, is a right gracious master.—My dominions,» he added, «are somewhat shrunk in compass, now that they have dwindled to an old hall and a bedchamber; but they are still wide enough for all the subjects which I can at present boast of.»

The Count of Crevecœur took his leave; and shortly after, they could hear the noise of the sentinels moving to their posts, accompanied with the word of command from the officers, and the hasty tread of the guards who were relieved. At length, all became still, and the only sound which filled the air was the sluggish murmur of the river Somme, as it glided, deep and muddy, under the walls of the castle.

« Go into the hall, my mates, » said Louis to his train; « but do not lie down to sleep. Hold yourselves in readiness, for there is still something to be done to-night, and that of moment. »

Oliver and Tristan retired to the hall accordingly, in which Le Balafré and the provost-marshal's two officers had remained, when the others entered the bed-chamber. They found that those without had thrown faggots enough upon the fire, to serve the purpose of light and heat at the same time, and wrapping themselves in their cloaks, had sate down on the floor, in postures which variously expressed the discomposure and dejection of their minds. Oliver and Tristan saw nothing better to be done, than to follow their example; and, never very good friends in the days of their court-prosperity, they were both equally reluctant to repose confidence in each other upon this strange and sudden reverse of fortune. So that the whole party sate in silent dejection.

Meanwhile, their master underwent, in the

retirement of his secret chamber, agonies which might have atoned for some of those which had been imposed by his command. He paced the room with short and unequal steps, often stood still and clasped his hands together, and gave loose, in short, to agitation, which in public he had found himself able to suppress so successfully. At length, pausing and wringing his hands, he planted himself opposite to the wicket-door, which had been pointed out by old Mornay as leading to the scene of the murder of one of his predecessors, and gradually gave voice to his feelings in a broken soliloquy.

«Charles the Simple—Charles the Simple!—what will posterity call the Eleventh Louis, whose blood will probably soon refresh the stains of thine? Louis the Fool—Louis the Driveller—Louis the Infatuated—are all terms too slight to mark the extremity of my idiocy! To think these hot-headed Liegeois, to whom rebellion is as natural as their food, would remain quiet—to dream that the Wild Beast of Ardennes would for a moment be interrupted in his career of force and blood-thirsty brutality—to suppose that I could use reason and arguments to any good purpose with Charles of Burgundy, until I had tried the force of such exhortations with success upon a wild bull—Fool, and double idiot that I was! But the villain Martius shall not escape—He has been at the bottom of this—he and the vile priest, the

detestable Balue. If I ever get out of this danger, I will tear from his head the cardinal's cap, though I pull the scalp along with it. But the other traitor is in my hands—I am yet King enough—have yet an empire roomy enough—for the punishment of the quack-salving, word-mongering, star-gazing, lie-coining impostor, who has at once made a prisoner and a dupe of me!—The conjunction of the constellations —ay, the conjunction—He must talk nonsense which would scarce gull a thrice-sodden sheep's-head, and I must be idiot enough to think I understood him! But we will see presently what the conjunction hath really boded. But first let me to my devotions.»

Above the little door, in memory perhaps of the deed which had been done within, was a rude niche, containing a crucifix cut in stone. Upon this emblem the King fixed his eyes, as if about to kneel, but stopped short, as if he applied to the blessed image the principles of worldly policy, and deemed it rash to approach its presence without having secured the private intercession of some supposed favourite. He therefore turned from the crucifix as unworthy to look upon it, and selecting from the images with which, as often mentioned, his hat was completely garnished, a representation of the Lady of Clery, knelt down before it, and made the following extraordinary prayer; in which, it is to be observed, the grossness of his su-

perstition induced him, in some degree, to consider the Virgin of Clery as a different person from the Madonna of Embrun, a favourite idol, to whom he often paid his vows.

« Sweet Lady of Clery, » he exclaimed, clasping his hands and beating his breast while he spoke— « blessed Mother of Mercy! thou who art omnipotent with Omnipotence, have compassion with me a sinner! It is true, that I have something neglected thee for thy blessed sister of Embrun; but I am a King—my power is great, my wealth boundless; and, were it otherwise, I would double the *gabelle* on my subjects, rather than not pay my debts to you both. Undo these iron doors—fill up these tremendous moats—lead me as a mother leads a child, out of this present and pressing danger! If I have given thy sister the command of my guards, thou shalt have the broad and rich province of Champagne; and its vineyards shall pour their abundance into thy convent. I had promised the province to my brother Charles; but he, thou knowest, is dead—poisoned by that wicked Abbé of Angely, whom, if I live, I will punish!—I promised this once before, but this time I will keep my word.— If I had any knowledge of the crime, believe, dearest patroness, it was because I knew no better method of quieting the discontents of my kingdom. O, do not reckon that old debt to my account to-day; but be, as thou hast ever

been, kind, benignant, and easy to be entreated! Sweetest Lady, work with thy child, that he will pardon all past sins, and one—one little deed which I must do this night—nay, it is no *sin*, dearest Lady of Clery—no sin, but an act of justice privately administered; for the villain is the greatest impostor that ever poured falsehood into a prince's ear, and leans besides to the filthy heresy of the Greeks. He is not worth thy protection; leave him to my care; and hold it as good service, as the man is a necromancer and wizard, that is not worth thy thought and care—a dog, the extinction of whose life ought to be of as little consequence in thine eyes, as the treading out a spark that drops from a lamp or springs from a fire. Think not of this little matter, gentlest, kindest lady, but only think how thou canst best aid me in my troubles! and I here bind my royal signet to thy effigy, in token that I will keep word concerning the county of Champagne, and that this will be the last time I will trouble thee in affairs of blood, knowing thou art so kind, so gentle, and so tender-hearted.»

After this extraordinary contract with the object of his adoration, Louis recited, apparently with deep devotion, the seven penitential psalms in Latin, and several aves, and prayers especially belonging to the service of the Virgin. He then arose, satisfied that he had

secured the intercession of the saint to whom he had prayed, the rather, as he craftily reflected, that most of the sins for which he had requested her mediation on former occasions had been of a different character, and that, therefore, the Lady of Clery was less likely to consider him as a hardened and habitual shedder of blood, than the other saints whom he had more frequently made confidants of his crimes in that respect. [1]

When he had thus cleared his conscience, or rather whited it over like a sepulchre, the King thrust his head out at the door of the hall, and summoned Le Balafré into his apartment. «My good soldier,» he said, «thou hast served me long, and hast had little promotion. We are here in a case where I may either live or die; but I would not willingly die an ungrateful man, or leave, so far as the saints may place it in my power, either a friend or enemy unrecompensed. Now, I have a friend to be rewarded—that is thyself—an enemy to be punished according to his deserts, and that is the base, treacherous villain, Martius Galeotti, who, by his impostures and specious

[1] While I perused the corresponding passages in the old manuscript chronicle, I could not help feeling astonished that an intellect such as that of Louis XI. certainly was, could so delude itself by a sort of superstition, of which one would think the stupidest savages incapable; but the terms of the King's prayer, on a similar occasion, as preserved by Brantôme, are of a tenor fully as extraordinary.

falsehoods, has trained me hither into the power of my mortal enemy, with as firm a purpose of my destruction, as ever butcher had of slaying the beast which he drove to the shambles.»

« I will challenge him on that quarrel,» said Le Balafré. «I doubt not but the Duke of Burgundy is so much a friend to men of the sword, that he will allow us a fair field within some reasonable space; and if your Majesty live so long, and enjoy so much freedom, you shall behold me do battle in your right, and take as proper a vengeance on this philosopher as your heart could desire.»

«I commend your bravery and your devotion to my service,» said the King. «But this treacherous villain is a stout man-at-arms, and I would not willingly risk thy life, my brave soldier.»

« I were no brave soldier, if it please your Majesty,» said Balafré, « if I dared not face a better man than he. A fine thing it would be for me, who can neither read nor write, to be afraid of a fat lurdane, who has done little else all his life!»

« Nevertheless,» said the King, «it is not our pleasure so to put thee in venture, Balafré. This traitor comes hither, summoned by our command. We would have thee, so soon as thou canst find occasion, close up with him,

and smite him under the fifth rib—Doest thou understand me?»

«Truly, I do,» answered Le Balafré; «but, if it please your Majesty, this is a matter entirely out of my course of pratice. I could not kill you a dog, unless it were in hot assault, or pursuit, or defiance given, or such like.»

«Why sure, *thou* dost not pretend to tenderness of heart?» said the King, «thou who hast been first in storm and siege, and most eager, as men tell me, on the pleasures and advantages which are gained on such occasions by the rough heart and the bloody hand?»

«My Lord,» answered Le Balafré, «I have neither feared nor spared your enemies, sword in hand. And an assault is a desperate matter, under risks which raise a man's blood so, that, by Saint Andrew, it will not settle for an hour or two,—which I call a fair license for plundering after a storm. And God pity us poor soldiers, who are first driven mad with danger, and then madder with victory. I have heard of a legion consisting entirely of saints; and methinks it would take them all to pray and intercede for the rest of the army, and for all who wear plumes and corslets, buff-coats and broad-swords. But what your Majesty purposes is out of my course of practice, though I will never deny that it has been wide enough. As for the astrologer, if he be a traitor, let him e'en die a traitor's death—I will neither meddle

nor make with it. Your Majesty has your provost, and two of his marshal's-men without, who are more fit for dealing with him than a Scottish gentleman of my family and standing in the service.»

«You say well,» said the King; «but, at least, it belongs to thy duty to prevent interruption, and to guard the execution of my most just sentence.»

«I will do so against all Peronne,» said Le Balafré. «Your Majesty need not doubt my fealty, in that which I can reconcile to my conscience, which, for my own convenience and the service of your royal Majesty, I can vouch to be a pretty large one—at least, I know I have done some deeds for your Majesty, which I would rather have eaten a handful of my own dagger than I would have done for any else.»

«Let that rest,» said the King; «and hear you—when Galeotti is admitted, and the door shut on him, do you stand to your weapon, and guard the entrance on the inside of the apartment. Let no one intrude—that is all I require of you. Go hence, and send the provost-marshal to me.»

Balafré left the apartment accordingly, and in a minute afterwards Tristan l'Hermite entered from the hall.

«Welcome, gossip,» said the King; «what thinkest thou of our situation?»

«As of men sentenced to death,» said the provost-marshal, «unless there come a reprieve from the Duke.»

«Reprieved or not, he that decoyed us into this snare shall go our fourier to the next world, to take up lodgings for us,» said the King, with a grisly and ferocious smile. «Tristan, thou hast done many an act of brave justice—*finis*—I should have said *funis coronat opus*—thou must stand by me to the end.»

«I will, my liege,» said Tristan; «I am but a plain fellow, but I am grateful. I will do my duty within these walls, or elsewhere; and while I live, your Majesty's breath shall pour as potential a note of condemnation, and your sentence be as literally executed, as when you sate on your own throne. They may deal with me the next hour for it if they will—I care not.»

«It is even what I expected of thee, my loving gossip,» said Louis; «but hast thou good assistance?—the traitor is strong and able-bodied, and will doubtless be clamorous for aid. The Scot will do nought but keep the door; and well that he can be brought to that by flattery and humouring. Then Oliver is good for nothing but lying, flattering, and suggesting dangerous counsels; and, *Ventre Saint-Dieu!* I think is more like one day to deserve the halter himself, than to use it to another.

Have you men, think you, and means, to make sharp and sure work?»

«I have Trois-Eschelles and Petit-André with me,» said he—«men so expert in their office, that out of three men, they would hang up one ere his two companions were aware. And we have all resolved to live or die with your Majesty, knowing we shall have as short breath to draw were you gone, as ever fell to the lot of any of our patients.—But what is to be our present subject, an it please your Majesty? I love to be sure of my man; for, as your Majesty is pleased sometimes to remind me, I have now and then mistaken the criminal, and strung up in his place an honest labourer, who had given your Majesty no offence.»

«Most true,» said the other. «Know then, Tristan, that the condemned person is Martius Galeotti.—You start, but it is even as I say. The villain hath trained us all hither by false and treacherous representations, that he might put us into the hands of the Duke of Burgundy without defence.»

«But not without vengeance!» said Tristan; «were it the last act of my life, I would sting him home like an expiring wasp, should I be crushed to pieces on the next instant!»

«I know thy trusty spirit,» said the King, «and the pleasure which, like other good men, thou doest find in the discharge of thy duty, since virtue, as the schoolmen say, is its own

reward. But away, and prepare the priests, for the victim approaches.»

«Would you have it done in your own presence, my gracious liege?» said Tristan.

Louis declined this offer; but charged the provost-marshal to have every thing ready for the punctual execution of his commands the moment the astrologer left his apartment; «for,» said the King, «I will see the villain once more, just to observe how he bears himself towards the master whom he has led into the toils. I shall love to see the sense of approaching death strike the colour from that ruddy cheek, and dim that eye which laughed as it lied.—O, that there were but another with him, whose counsels aided his prognostications! But if I survive this—look to your scarlet, my lord cardinal! for Rome shall scarce protect you—be it spoken under favour of Saint Peter and the blessed Lady of Clery, who is all over mercy.—Why do you tarry? Go get your grooms ready. I expect the villain instantly. I pray to Heaven he take not fear and come not!—that were indeed a baulk. Begone, Tristan—thou wert not wont to be so slow when business was to be done.»

«On the contrary, an it like your Majesty, you were ever wont to say that I was too fast, and mistook your purpose, and did the job on the wrong subject. Now, please your Majesty to give me a sign, just when you part with

Galeotti for the night, whether the business goes on or no. I have known your Majesty once or twice change your mind, and blame me for over-dispatch.»

«Thou suspicious creature,» answered King Louis, «I tell thee I will *not* change my mind; —but, to silence thy remonstrances, observe, if I say to the knave at parting, 'There is a heaven above us!' then let the business go on; but if I say, 'Go in peace,' you will understand that my purpose is altered.»

«My head is somewhat of the dullest out of my own department,» said Tristan l'Hermite. «Stay, let me rehearse—If you bid him depart in peace, I am to have him dealt upon?»

«No, no—idiot, no,» said the King; «in that case, you let him pass free. But if I say, '*There is a heaven above us;*' up with him a yard or two nearer the planets he is so conversant with.»

«I wish we may have the means here,» said the provost.

«Then *up* with him or *down* with him, it matters not which,» answered the King, grimly smiling.

«And the body,» said the provost, «how shall we dispose of it?»

«Let me see an instant,» said the King— «the windows of the hall are too narrow; but that projecting oriel is wide enough. We will over with him into the Somme, and put a paper

on his breast, with the legend, 'Let the justice of the King pass toll-free.' The Duke's officers may seize it for duties if they dare.»

The provost-marshal left the apartment of Louis, and summoned his two assistants to council in an embrasure in the great hall, where Trois-Eschelles stuck a torch against the wall to give them light. They discoursed in whispers, little noticed by Oliver le Dain, who seemed sunk in dejection, and Le Balafré, who was fast asleep.

«Comrades,» said the provost to his executioners, «perhaps you have thought that our vocation was over, or that, at least, we were more likely to be the subjects of the duty of others, than to have any more to discharge on our own parts. But courage, my mates! our gracious master has reserved for us one noble cast of our office, and it must be gallantly executed, as by men who would live in history.»

«Ay, I guess how it will be,» said Trois-Eschelles; «our patron is like the old Kaisars of Rome, who, when things came to an extremity, or, as we would say, to the ladder-foot with them, were wont to select from their own ministers of justice some experienced person, who might spare their sacred persons from the awkward attempts of a novice or blunderer in our mystery. It was a pretty custom for Ethnics; but, as a good catholic, I should make

scruple at laying hands on the Most Christian King.»

« Nay, but brother, you are ever too scrupulous,» said Petit-André. « If he issues word and warrant for his own execution, I see not how we can in duty dispute it. He that dwells at Rome must obey the Pope—the marshal's-men must do their master's bidding, and he the King's.»

« Hush, you knaves!» said the provost-marshal, « there is here no purpose concerning the King's person, but only that of the Greek heretic, pagan and Mahomedan wizard, Martius Galeotti.»

« Galeotti!» answered Petit-André; « that comes quite natural. I never knew one of these legerdemain fellows, who pass their life, as one may say, in dancing upon a tight rope, but what they came at length to caper on the end of one — *tchick*.»

« My only concern is,» said Trois-Eschelles, looking upwards, « that the poor creature must die without confession.»

« Tush! tush!» said the provost-marshal in reply, « he is a rank heretic and necromancer —a whole college of priests could not absolve him from the doom he has deserved. Besides, if he hath a fancy that way, thou hast a gift, Trois-Eschelles, to serve him for ghostly father thyself. But, what is more material, I fear you must use your poniards, my mates;

for you have not here the fitting conveniences for the exercise of your profession.»

« Now, our Lady of the Isle of Paris forbid,» said Trois-Eschelles, « that the King's command should find me destitute of my tools! I always wear around my body Saint Francis's cord, doubled four times, with a handsome loop at the further end of it; for I am of the company of Saint Francis, and may wear his cowl when I am *in extremis*—I thank God and the good fathers of Saumur.»

« And for me,» said Petit-André, « I have always in my budget a handy block and sheaf, or a pulley, as they call it, with a strong screw for securing it where I list, in case we should travel where trees are scarce or high branched from the ground. I have found it a great convenience.»

« That will suit us well,» said the provost-marshal; « you have but to screw your pulley into yonder beam above the door, and pass the rope over it. I will keep the fellow in some conversation near the spot until you adjust the noose under his chin, and then.—»

« And then we run up the rope,» said Petit-André, « and, *tchick*, our astrologer is so far in heaven, that he hath not a foot on earth.»

« But these gentlemen,» said Trois-Eschelles, looking towards the chimney, « do not these help, and so take a handsell of our vocation?»

« Hem! no,» answered the provost; « the

barber only contrives mischief, which he leaves other men to execute; and for the Scot, he keeps the door when the deed is a-doing, which he hath not spirit or quickness sufficient to partake in more actively—every one to his trade.»

With infinite dexterity, and even a sort of delight which sweetened the sense of their own precarious situation, the worthy executioners of the provost's mandates adapted their rope and pulley for putting in force the sentence which had been uttered against Galeotti by the captive Monarch—seeming to rejoice that that last action was to be one so consistent with their past life. Tristan l'Hermite sate eyeing their proceedings with a species of satisfaction; while Oliver paid no attention to them whatever; and Ludovic Leslie, if, awaked by the bustle, he looked upon them at all, considered them as engaged in matters entirely unconnected with his own duty, and for which he was not to be regarded as responsible in one way or other.

CHAPTER VI.

RECRIMINATION.

Thy time is not yet out—the devil thou servest
Has not as yet deserted thee—he aids
The friends who drudge for him, as the blind man
Was aided by the guide, who lent his shoulder
O'er rough and smooth, until he reached the brink
Of the fell precipice—then hurl'd him downward.

Old Play.

When obeying the command, or rather the request of Louis,—for he was in circumstances in which, though a monarch, he could only *request* Le Glorieux to go in search of Martius Galeotti,—the jester had no trouble in executings his commission, betaking himself at once to the best tavern in Peronne, of which he himself was rather more than an occasional frequenter, being a great admirer of that species of liquor which reduced all other men's brains to a level with his own.

He found, or rather observed, the astrologer in the corner of the public drinking-room—a stove, as it is called in German and

Flemish—sitting in close colloquy with a female in a singular, and something like a Moorish or Asiatic garb, who, as Le Glorieux aproached Martius, rose as in the act to depart.

« These,» said the stranger, « are news upon which you may with absolute certainty rely;» and with that disappeared among the crowd of guests who sate grouped at different tables in the apartment.

« Cousin Philosopher,» said the jester, presenting himself, « Heaven no sooner relieves one sentinel than it sends another to supply the place. One fool being gone, here I come another, to guide you to the apartments of Louis of France.»

« And art thou the messenger?» said Martius, gazing on him with prompt apprehension, and discovering at once the jester's quality, though less intimated, as we have before noticed, than was usual, by his external appearance.

« Ay, sir, and like your learning,» answered Le Glorieux; «when Power sends Folly to intreat the approach of Wisdom, 't is a sure sign what foot the patient halts upon.»

« How if I refuse to come, when summoned at so late an hour by such a messenger?» said Galeotti.

« In that case, we will consult your ease, and carry you,» said Le Glorieux. « Here are half

a score of stout Burgundian yeomen at the door, with whom He of Crevecœur has furnished me to that effect. For know, that my friend Charles of Burgundy and I have not taken away our kinsman Louis's crown, which he was ass enough to put into our power, but have only filed and clipt it a little; and, though reduced to the size of a spangle, it is still pure gold. In plain terms, he is still paramount over his own people, yourself included, and Most Christian King of the old dining-hall in the castle of Peronne, to which you, as his liege subject, are presently obliged to repair.»

«I attend you, sir,» said Martius Galeotti, and accompanied Le Glorieux accordingly—seeing, perhaps, that no evasion was possible.

«Ay, sir,» said the fool, as they went towards the castle; «you do well; for we treat our kinsman as men use an old famished lion in his cage, and thrust him now and then a calf, to mumble with his old jaws.»

«Do you mean,» said Martius, «that the King intends me bodily injury?»

«Nay, that you can guess better than I,» said the jester; for, though the night be cloudy, I warrant you can see the stars through the mist. I know nothing of the matter, not I—only my mother always told me to go warily near an old rat in a trap, for he was never so much disposed to bite.»

The astrologer asked no more questions,

and Le Glorieux, according to the custom of those of his class, continued to run on in a wild and disordered strain of sarcasm and folly mingled together, until he delivered the philosopher to the guard at the castle-gate of Peronne, where he was passed from warder to warder, and at length admitted within Herbert's Tower.

The hints of the jester had not been lost on Martius Galeotti, and he saw something which seemed to confirm them in the look and manner of Tristan, whose mode of addressing him, as he marshalled him to the King's bed-chamber, was louring, sullen, and ominous. A close observer of what passed on earth, as well as among the heavenly bodies, the pulley and the rope also caught the astrologer's eye; and as the latter was in a state of vibration, he concluded that some one who had been busy adjusting it had been interrupted in the work by his sudden arrival. All this he saw, and summoned together his subtlety to evade the impending danger, resolved, should he find that impossible, to defend himself to the last against whosoever should assail him.

Thus resolved, and with a step and look corresponding to the determination he had taken, Martius presented himself before Louis, alike unabashed at the miscarriage of his predictions, and undismayed at the monarch's anger, and its probable consequences.

«Every good planet be gracious to your Majesty!» said Galeotti, with an inclination almost Oriental in manner — «Every evil constellation withhold their influences from my royal master!»

«Methinks,» replied the King, «that when you look around this apartment, when you think where it is situated, and how guarded, your wisdom might consider that my propitious stars had proved faithless, and that each evil conjunction had already done its worst. Art thou not ashamed, Martius, to see me here, and a prisoner, when you recollect by what assurances I was lured hither?»

«And art *thou* not ashamed, my royal Sire?» replied the philosopher; «thou, whose step in science was so forward, thy apprehension so quick, thy perseverance so unceasing—art *thou* not ashamed to turn from the first frown of fortune, like a craven from the first clash of arms? Didst thou propose to become participant of those mysteries which raise men above the passions, the mischances, the pains, the sorrows of life, a state only to be attained by rivalling the firmness of the ancient Stoic, and dost thou shrink from the first pressure of adversity, and forfeit the glorious prize for which thou didst start as a competitor, frightened out of the course, like a scared racer, by shadowy and unreal evils?»

«Shadowy and unreal! frontless as thou art!»

exclaimed the King, « is this dungeon unreal?—the weapons of the guards of my detested enemy Burgundy, which you may hear clash at the gate, are those shadows?—What, traitor, *are* real evils, if imprisonment, dethronement, and danger of life, are not so?»

« Ignorance—ignorance, my brother, and prejudice,» answered the sage, with great firmness, « are the only real evils. Believe me, that kings in the plenitude of power, if immersed in ignorance and prejudice, are less free than sages in a dungeon, and loaded with material chains. Towards this true happiness it is mine to guide you—be it yours to attend to my instructions.»

« And it is to such philosophical freedom that your lessons would have guided me?» said the King, very bitterly. « I would you had told me at Plessis, that the dominion promised me so liberally was an empire over my own passions; that the success of which I was assured related to my progress in philosophy; and that I might become as wise and as learned as a strolling mountebank of Italy, at the pitiful price of forfeiting the fairest crown in Christendom, and becoming tenant of a dungeon in Peronne? Go, sir, and think not to escape condign punishment—*There is a heaven above us!*»

« I leave you not to your fate,» replied Martius, « until I have vindicated, even in your

eyes, darkened as they are, that reputation, a brighter gem than the brightest in thy crown, and at which the world shall wonder, ages after all the race of Capet are mouldered into oblivion in the charnels of Saint Denis.»

«Speak on,» said the King; «thine impudence cannot make me change my purposes or my opinion—Yet as I may never again pass judgment as a King, I will not censure thee unheard. Speak, then—though the best thou canst say will be to speak the truth. Confess that I am a dupe, thou an impostor, thy pretended science a dream, and the planets which shine above us as little influential of our destiny, as their shadows, when reflected in the river, are capable of altering its course.»

«And how know'st thou,» answered the astrologer boldy, «the secret influence of yonder blessed lights? Speak'st thou of their inability to influence waters, when yet thou know'st not that even the weakest, the moon herself, —weakest because nearest to this wretched earth of ours—holds yet under her domination, not such poor streams as the Somme, but the tides of the mighty ocean itself, which ebb and increase as her disk waxes and wanes, and watch her influence as a slave waits the nod of a Sultana? And now, Louis of Valois, answer my parable in turn—Confess, art thou not like the foolish passenger, who becomes wroth with his pilot because he cannot bring the

vessel into harbour, without experiencing occasionally the adverse force of winds and currents? I could indeed point to thee the probable issue of thine enterprize as prosperous, but it was in the power of Heaven alone to conduct thee thither; and if the path be rough and dangerous, was it in my power to smooth or render it more safe? Where is thy wisdom of yesterday, which taught thee so truly to discern that the ways of destiny are often ruled to our advantage, though in opposition to our wishes?»

«You remind me—you remind me,» said the King, hastily, «of one specific falsehood. You foretold, yonder Scot should accomplish his enterprize fortunately for my interest and honour; and thou knowest it has so terminated, that no more mortal injury could I have received, than from the impression which the issue of that affair is like to make on the excited brain of the Mad Bull of Burgundy. This is a direct falsehood—Thou canst plead no evasion here—Canst refer to no remote favourable turn of the tide, for which, like an idiot sitting on the bank until the river shall pass away, thou wouldst have me wait contentedly.—Here thy craft deceived thee.—Thou wert weak enough to make a specific prediction, which has proved directly false.»

«Which will prove most firm and true,» answered the astrologer, boldly. «I would

desire no greater triumph of art over ignorance, than that prediction and its accomplishment will afford. I told thee he would be faithful in any honourable commission—Hath he not been so?—I told thee he would be scrupulous in aiding any evil enterprize—Hath he not proved so?—If you doubt it, go ask the Bohemian, Hayraddin Maugrabin.»

The King here coloured deeply with shame and anger.

«I told thee,» continued the astrologer, «that the conjunction of planets under which he set forth, augured danger to the person—and hath not his path been beset by danger?—I told thee, that it augured an advantage to the sender,—and of that thou wilt soon have the benefit.»

«Soon have the benefit!» exclaimed the King, «Have I not the result already, in disgrace and imprisonment?»

«No,» aswered the astrologer, «the end is not as yet—thine own tongue shall ere long confess the benefit which thou hast received, from the manner in which the messenger bore himself in discharging thy commission.»

«This is too—too insolent,» said the King, «at once to deceive and to insult—But hence!—think not my wrongs shall be unavenged.—*There is a heaven above us!*»

Galeotti turned to depart. «Yet stop—thou bearest thine imposture bravely out.—Let me

hear your answer to one question, and think ere you speak.—Can thy pretended skill ascertain the hour of thine own death?»

«Only by referring to the fate of another,» said Galeotti.

«I understand not thine answer,» said Louis.

«Know then, O King,» said Martius, «that this only I can tell with certainty concerning mine own death, that it shall take place exactly twenty-four hours before that of your Majesty.»

«Ha! sayest thou?» said Louis, his countenance again altering.—«Hold—hold—go not—wait one moment.—Saidst thou, *my* death should follow *thine* so closely?»

«Within the space of twenty-four hours,» repeated Galeotti, firmly, «if there be one sparkle of true divination in those bright and mysterious intelligences, which speak, though without a tongue.—I wish your Majesty good rest.»

«Hold—hold—go not,» said the King, taking him by the arm, and leading him from the door, «Martius Galeotti, I have been a kind master to thee—enriched thee—made thee my friend—my companion—the instructor of my studies.—Be open with me, I intreat you.—Is there ought in this art of yours in very deed?—Shall this Scot's mission be, in fact, propitious to me? —And is the measure of our lives so very—*very* nearly matched?—Confess, my

good Martius, you speak after the trick of your trade—Confess, I pray you, and you shall have no displeasure at my hand.—I am in years—a prisoner—likely to be deprived of a kingdom—to one in my condition, truth is worth kingdoms, and it is from thee, dearest Martius, that I must look for this inestimable jewel.»

«And I have laid it before your Majesty,» said Galeotti, «at the risk that, in brutal passion, you might turn upon me and rend me.»

«Who, I, Galeotti?» replied Louis mildly; «Alas! thou mistakest me!—Am I not captive—and should not I be patient, especially since my anger can only show my impotence?—Tell me then in sincerity—Have you fooled me?—Or is your science true, and do yo truly report it?»

«Your Majesty will forgive me if I reply to you,» said Martius Galeotti, «that time only—time and the event, will convince incredulity. It suits ill the place of confidence which I have held at the council-table of the renowned conqueror, Mathias Corvinus of Hungary—nay, in the cabinet of the emperor himself—to reiterate assurances of that which I have advanced as true. If you will not believe me, I can but refer to the course of events. A day, or two days' patience, will prove or disprove what I have averred concerning the young Scot; and I will be contented to die on the wheel, and have my limbs broken joint by joint, if your

Majesty have not advantage, and that in a most important degree, from the dauntless conduct of that Quentin Durward. But if I were to die under such tortures, it would be well your Majesty should seek a ghostly father; for, from the moment my last groan is drawn, only twenty-four hours will remain to you for confession and penitence.»

Louis continued to keep hold of Galeotti's robe as he led him towards the door, and pronounced as he opened it, in a loud voice, « To-morrow we 'll talk more of this. Go in peace, my learned father—*Go in peace—Go in peace!*»

He repeated these words three times; and, still afraid that the provost-marshal might mistake his purpose, he led the astrologer into the hall, holding fast his robe, as if afraid that he should be torn from him, and put to death before his eyes. He did not unloose his grasp until he had not only repeated again and again the gracious phrase, « Go in peace,» but even made a private signal to the provost-marshal, to enjoin a suspension of all proceedings against the person of the astrologer.

Thus did the possession of some secret information, joined to audacious courage and readiness of wit, save Galeotti from the most imminent danger; and thus was Louis, the most sagacious, as well as the most vindictive, amongst the monarchs of the period, cheated of his revenge by the influence of superstition

upon a selfish temper, and a mind to which, from the consciousness of many crimes, the fear of death was peculiarly terrible.

He felt, however, considerable mortification at being obliged to relinquish his purposed vengeance; and the disappointment seemed to be shared by his satellites, to whom the execution was to have been committed. Le Balafré alone, perfectly indifferent on the subject, so soon as the countermanding signal was given, left the door at which he had posted himself, and in a few minutes was fast asleep.

The provost-marshal, as the group reclined themselves to repose in the hall after the King retired to his bed-chamber, continued to eye the goodly form of the astrologer, with the look of a mastiff watching a joint of meat, which the cook had retrieved from his jaws, while his attendants communicated to each other in brief sentences their characteristic sentiments.

«The poor blinded necromancer,» whispered Trois-Eschelles, with an air of spiritual unction and commiseration, to his comrade, Petit-André, «hath lost the fairest chance of expiating some of his vile sorceries, by dying through means of the cord of the blessed Saint Francis! and I had purpose, indeed, to leave the comfortable noose around his neck, to scare the foul fiend from his unhappy carcase.»

«And I,» said Petit-André, «have missed the rarest opportunity of knowing how far a weight of seventeen stone will stretch a three-plied cord!—It would have been a glorious experiment in our line,—and the jolly old boy would have died so easily!»

While this whispered dialogue was going forward, Martius, who had taken the opposite side of the huge stone fire-place, round which the whole group was assembled, regarded them askance, and with a look of suspicion. He first put his hand into his vest, and satisfied himself that the handle of a very sharp double-edged poniard, which he always carried about him, was disposed conveniently for his grasp; for, as we have already noticed, he was, though now somewhat unwieldy, a powerful athletic man, and prompt and active at the use of his weapon. Satisfied that this trusty instrument was in readiness, he next took from his bosom a scroll of parchment, inscribed with Greek characters, and marked with cabalistic signs, drew together the wood in the fire-place, and made a blaze by which he could distinguish the features and attitude of all who sate or lay around—the heavy and deep slumbers of the Scottish soldier, who lay motionless, with his rough countenance as immoveable as if it were cast in bronze—the pale and anxious face of Oliver, who at one time assumed the appearance of slumber, and again opened his eyes

and raised his head hastily, as if stung by some internal throe, or awakened by some distant sound—the discontented, savage, bull-dog aspect of the provost, who looked

——frustrate of his will,
Not half sufficed, and greedy yet to kill—

while the back-ground was filled up by the ghastly hypocritical countenance of Trois-Eschelles, whose eyes were cast up towards heaven, as if he was internally saying his devotions; and the grim drollery of Petit-André, who amused himself with mimicking the gestures and wry faces of his comrade before he betook himself to sleep.

Amidst these vulgar and ignoble countenances, nothing could show to greater advantage than the stately form, handsome mien, and commanding features of the astrologer, who might have passed for one of the ancient magi, imprisoned in a den of robbers, and about to invoke a spirit to accomplish his liberation. And, indeed, had he been distinguished by nothing else than the beauty of the graceful and flowing beard which descended over the mysterious roll which he held in his hand, one might have been pardoned regretting that so noble an appendage had been bestowed on him, who put both talents, learning, and the advantages of eloquence, and a majestic per-

son, to the mean purposes of a cheat and an impostor.

Thus passed the night in Count Herbert's Tower, in the Castle of Peronne. When the first light of dawn penetrated the ancient Gothic chamber, the King summoned Oliver to his presence, who found the Monarch sitting in his night-gown, and was astonished at the alteration which one night of mortal anxiety had made in his looks. He would have expressed some anxiety on the subject, but the King silenced him by entering into a statement of the various modes by which he had previously endeavoured to form friends at the court of Burgundy, and which Oliver was charged to prosecute so soon as he should be permitted to stir abroad.

And never was that wily minister more struck with the clearness of the King's intellect, and his intimate knowledge of all the springs which influence human actions, than he was during that memorable consultation.

About two hours afterwards, Oliver accordingly obtained permission from the Count of Crevecœur to go out and execute the commissions which his master had entrusted him with; and Louis, sending for the astrologer, in whom he seemed to have renewed his faith, held with him, in like manner, a long consultation, the issue of which appeared to give him more spirits and confidence than he had at first ex-

hibited; so that he dressed himself, and received the morning compliments of Crevecœur with a calmness, at which the Burgundian lord could not help wondering, the rather that he had already heard that the Duke had passed several hours in a state of mind which seemed to render the King's safety very precarious.

CHAPTER VII.

UNCERTAINTY.

Our counsels waver like the unsteady bark,
That reels amid the strife of meeting currents.

Old Play.

If the night passed by Louis was fearfully anxious and agitated, that spent by the Duke of Burgundy, who had at no time the same mastery over his passions, and, indeed, who permitted them almost a free and uncontrolled dominion over his actions, was still more disturbed.

According to the custom of the period, two of his principal and most favoured counsellors, Hymbercourt and d'Argenton, shared his bed-chamber, couches being prepared for them near the bed of the prince. Their attendance was never more necessary than upon this night, when, distracted by sorrow, by passion, by the desire of revenge, and by the sense of honour, which forbade him to exercise it upon Louis in his present condition, the Duke's

mind resembled a volcano in eruption, which throws forth all the different contents of the mountain, mingled and molten into one mass.

He refused to throw off his clothes, or to make any preparation for sleep; but spent the night in a violent succession of the most strong passions. In some paroxysms he talked incessantly to his attendants so thick and so rapidly, that they were really afraid his senses would give way; chusing for his theme, the merits and the kindness of heart of the murdered Bishop of Liege, and recalling all the instances of mutual kindness, affection, and confidence, which had passed between them, until he had worked himself into such a transport of grief, that he threw himself upon his face in the bed, and seemed ready to choke with the sobs and tears which he endeavoured to stifle. Then starting from the couch, he gave vent at once to another and more furious mood, and traversed the room hastily, uttering incoherent threats, and still more incoherent oaths of vengeance, while, stamping with his foot, according to his customary action, he invoked Saint George, Saint Andrew, and whomever else he held most holy, to bear witness, that he would take bloody vengeance on de la Marck, on the people of Liege, and on *him* who was the author of the whole.—These last threats, uttered more obscurely than the others, obviously concerned the person of

the King; and at one time the Duke expressed his determination to send for the Duke of Normandy, the brother of the King, and with whom Louis was on the worst terms, in order to compel the captive monarch to surrender either the crown itself, or some of its most valuable rights and appanages.

Another day and night passed in the same stormy and fitful deliberations, or rather rapid transitions of passion; for the Duke scarcely eat or drank, never changed his dress, and, altogether, demeaned himself like one in whom rage might terminate in utter insanity. By degrees he became more composed, and began to hold, from time to time, consultations with his ministers, in which much was proposed, but nothing resolved upon. Comines assures us, that at one time a courier was mounted in readiness to depart for the purpose of summoning the Duke of Normandy; and in that event, the prison of the deposed monarch would probably have been found, as in similar cases, a brief road to his grave.

At other times, when Charles had exhausted his fury, he sate with his features fixed in stern and rigid immobility, like one who broods over some desperate deed, to which he is as yet unable to work up his resolution. And unquestionably it would have needed little more than an insidious hint from any of the counsellors who attended his person, to have

pushed the Duke to some very desperate action. But the nobles of Burgundy, from the sacred character attached to the person of a King, and a lord paramount, and from a regard to the public faith, as well as that of their duke, which had been pledged when Louis threw himself into their power, were almost unanimously inclined to recommend moderate measures; and the arguments which Hymbercourt and d'Argenton had now and then ventured to insinuate during the night, were, in the cooler hours of the next morning, advanced and urged by Crevecœur and others. Possibly their zeal in behalf of the King might not be entirely disinterested. Many, as we have mentioned, had already experienced the bounty of the King; others had either estates or pretensions in France, which placed them a little under his influence; and it is certain that the treasure, which had loaded four mules when the King entered Peronne, became much lighter in the course of these negotiations.

In the course of the third day, the Count of Campo-Basso brought his Italian wit to assist the counsels of Charles; and well was it for Louis, that he had not arrived when the Duke was in his first fury. Immediately on his arrival, a regular meeting of the Duke's counsellors was convened, for considering the measures to be adopted in this singular crisis.

On this occasion, Campo-Basso gave his opi-

nion, couched in the apologue of the traveller, the adder, and the fox; and reminded the Duke of the advice which reynard gave to the man, that he should crush his mortal enemy, now that chance had placed his fate at his disposal. D'Argenton, who saw the Duke's eyes sparkle at a proposal which his own violence of temper had already repeatedly suggested, hastened to state the possibility, that Louis might not be, in fact, so directly accessory to the sanguinary action which had been committed at Schonwaldt; that he might be able to clear himself of the imputation laid to his charge, and perhaps to make other atonement for the distractions which his intrigues had occasioned in the Duke's dominions, and those of his allies; and that an act of violence perpetrated on the King, was sure to bring both on France and Burgundy a train of the most unhappy consequences, among which not the least to be feared was, that the English might avail themselves of the commotions and civil discord which must needs ensue, to repossess themselves of Normandy and Guyenne, and renew those dreadful wars, which had only and with difficulty been terminated, by the union of both France and Burgundy against the common enemy. Finally, he confessed, that he did not mean to urge the absolute and free dismissal of Louis; but only, that the Duke should avail himself no farther of his present condition,

than merely to establish a fair and equitable treaty between the countries, with such security on the King's part, as should make it difficult for him to break his faith, or disturb the internal peace of Burgundy in future. Hymbercourt, Crevecœur, and others, signified their reprobation of the violent measures proposed by Campo-Basso, and their opinion, that in the way of treaty more permanent advantages could be obtained, and in a manner more honourable for Burgundy, than by an action which would stain her with a breach of faith and hospitality.

The Duke listened to these arguments with his looks fixed on the ground, and his brows so knitted together as to bring his bushy eyebrows into one mass. But when Crevecœur proceeded to say, that he did not believe Louis either knew of, or was accessory to, the atrocious act of violence committed at Schonwaldt, Charles raised his head, and, darting a fierce look at his counsellor, exclaimed, «Have you too, Crevecœur, heard the gold of France clink?—Methinks it rings in my councils as merrily as ever the bells of Saint Denis? Dare any one say that Louis is not the fomenter of these feuds in Flanders?»

«My gracious lord,» said Crevecœur, «my hand has ever been more conversant with steel than with gold; and so far am I from holding that Louis is free from the charge of having

caused the disturbances in Flanders, that it is not long since, in the face of his whole court, I charged him with that breach of faith, and offered him defiance in your name. But although his intrigues have been doubtless the original cause of these commotions, I am so far from believing that he authorized the death of the archbishop, that I believe one of his emissaries publicly protested against it; and I could produce the man, were it your grace's pleasure to see him.»

«It *is* our pleasure,» said the Duke. «Saint George! can you doubt that we desire to act justly? Even in the highest flight of our passion, we are known for an upright and a just judge. We will see France ourself—we will ourself charge him with our wrongs, and ourself state to him the reparation which we expect and demand. If he shall be found guiltless of this murder, the atonement for other crimes may be more easy—If he hath been guilty, who shall say that a life of penitence in some retired monastery were not a most deserved and a most merciful doom?—Who,» he added, kindling as he spoke, «who shall dare to blame a revenge yet more direct and more speedy? Let your witness attend—We will to the castle at the hour before noon. Some articles we will minute down with which he shall comply, or woe on his head! Break up the council, and dismiss yourselves. I will

but change my dress, as this is scarce a fitting trim in which to wait on my *most gracious Sovereign.*»

With a deep and bitter emphasis on the last expression, the Duke arose, and strode out of the room.

« Louis's safety, and, what is worse, the honour of Burgundy, depend on a cast of the dice,» said Hymbercourt to Crevecœur and to d'Argenton—« Haste thee to the castle, d'Argenton—thou hast a better filed tongue than either Crevecœur or I. Explain to Louis what storm is approaching—he will best know how to pilot himself. I trust this Life-guardsman will say nothing which can aggravate, for who knows what may have been the secret commission with which he was charged?»

« The young man,» said Crevecœur, « seems bold, yet prudent and wary far beyond his years. In all which he said to me he was tender of the King's character, as of that of the Prince whom he serves. I trust he will be equally so in the Duke's presence. I must go seek him, and also the young Countess of Croye.»

« The Countess!—you told us you had left her at Saint Bridget's Nunnery.»

« Ay, but I was obliged,» said the count, « to send for her express, by the Duke's orders; and she has been brought hither on a litter, as being unable to travel otherwise. She was in a

state of the deepest distress, both on account of the uncertainty of the fate of her kinswoman, the Lady Hameline, and the gloom which overhangs her own; guilty as she has been of a feudal delinquency, in withdrawing herself from the protection of her liege lord, Duke Charles, who is not the person in the world most likely to view with indifference what trenches on his seignorial rights.»

The information that the young countess was in the hands of Charles, added fresh and more pointed thorns to Louis's reflections. He was conscious that, by explaining the intrigues by which he had induced the Lady Hameline and her to resort to Peronne, she might supply that evidence which he had removed by the execution of Zamet Maugrabin; and he knew well how much such proof of his having interfered with the rights of the Duke of Burgundy, would furnish both motive and pretext for Charles availing himself to the uttermost of his present predicament.

Louis discoursed on these matters with great anxiety to the Sieur d'Argenton, whose acute and political talents better suited the King's temper than the blunt martial character of Crevecœur, or the feudal haughtiness of d'Hymbercourt.

«These iron-handed soldiers, my good friend Comines,» he said to his future historian, «should never enter a King's cabinet, but be

left with the halberds and partizans in the antichamber. Their hands are indeed made for our use, but the monarch who puts their heads to any better occupation than that of anvils for his enemies' swords and maces, ranks with the fool who presented his mistress with a dog-leash for a carcanet. It is with such as thou, Philip, whose eyes are gifted with the quick and keen sense that sees beyond the exterior surface of affairs, that princes should share their council-table, their cabinet—what do I say?—the most secret recesses of their soul.»

D'Argenton, himself so keen a spirit, was naturally gratified with the approbation of the most sagacious prince in Europe; and he could not so far disguise his internal satisfaction, that Louis was not aware that he had made some impression on him.

« I would,» continued he, « that I had such a servant, or rather that I were worthy to have one! I had not then been in this unfortunate situation; which, nevertheless, I should hardly regret, could I but discover any means of securing the services of so experienced a statist.»

D'Argenton said, that all his faculties, such as they were, were at the service of his Most Christian Majesty, saving always his allegiance to his rightful lord, Duke Charles of Burgundy.

« And am I one who would seduce you from thatallegiance?» said Louis, pathetically. « Alas!

am I not now endangered by having reposed too much confidence in my vassal? and can the cause of feudal good faith be more sacred with any than with me, whose safety depends on an appeal to it?—No, Philip des Comines—continue to serve Charles of Burgundy; and you will best serve him, by bringing round a fair accommodation with Louis of France. In doing thus, you will serve us both, and one, at least, will be grateful. I am told your appointments in this court hardly match those of the Grand Falconer; and thus the services of the wisest counsellor in Europe are put on a level, or rather ranked below, those of a fellow who feeds and physicks kites! France has wide lands—her King has much gold. Allow me, my friend, to rectify this scandalous inequality. The means are not distant—Permit me to use them.»

The King produced a weighty bag of money; but Comines, more delicate in his sentiments than most courtiers of that time, declined the proffer, declaring himself perfectly satisfied with the liberality of his native prince, and assuring Louis that his desire to serve him could not be increased by the acceptance of any such gratuity as he had proposed.

« Singular man! » exclaimed the King; « let me embrace the only courtier of his time, at once capable and incorruptible. Wisdom is to be desired more than fine gold; and believe

me, I trust in thy kindness, Philip, at this pinch, more than I do in the purchased assistance of many who have received my gifts. I know you will not counsel your master to abuse such an opportunity, as fortune, and, to speak plain, Des Comines, as my own folly has afforded him.»

« To *abuse* it, by no means,» answered d'Argenton; « but most certainly to *use* it.»

« How, and in what degree?» said Louis. « I am not ass enough to expect that I shall escape without some ransom—but let it be a reasonable one—reason I am ever willing to listen to—at Paris or at Plessis, equally as at Peronne.»

« Ah, but if it like your Majesty,» replied Des Comines, « Reason at Paris or Plessis was used to speak in so low and soft a tone of voice, that she could not always gain an audience of your Majesty—at Peronne, she borrows the speaking-trumpet of Necessity, and her voice becomes lordly and imperative.»

« You are figurative,» said Louis, unable to restrain an emotion of peevishness; « I am a plain man, Sir of Argenton. I pray you leave your tropes, and come to plain ground. What does your Duke expect of me?»

« I am the bearer of no propositions, my lord,» said Des Comines; « the Duke will soon explain his own pleasure; but some things occur to me as proposals, for which your Majesty ought to

hold yourself prepared. As, for example, the final cession of these towns here upon the Somme.»

« I expected so much,» said Louis.

« That you should disown the Liegeois, and William De la Marck.»

« As willingly as I disclaim Hell and Satan,» said Louis.

« Ample security will be required, by hostages, or occupation of fortresses, or otherwise, that France shall in future abstain from stirring up rebellion among the Flemings.»

« It is something new,» answered the King, » that a vassal should demand pledges from his sovereign : but let that pass too.»

« A suitable and independent appanage for your illustrious brother, the ally and friend of my master—Normandy or Champagne. The Duke loves your father's house, my liege.»

« So well,» answered Louis, « that, *Mort-Dieu !* he 's about to make them all kings.—Is your budget of hints yet emptied?»

« Not entirely,» answered the counsellor: « it will certainly be required that your Majesty will forbear molesting, as you have done of late, the Duke de Bretagne, and that you will no longer contest the right which he and other grand feudatories have, to strike money, to term themselves dukes and princes by the grace of God—»

« In a word, to make so many kings of my

vassals. Sir Philip, would you make a fratricide of me?—you remember well my brother Charles—he was no sooner Duke of Guyenne than he died.—And what will be left to the descendants of Charlemagne, after giving away these rich provinces, save to smear themselves with oil at Rheims, and to eat their dinner under a high canopy!»

«We will diminish your Majesty's concern on that score, by giving you a companion in that solitary exaltation,» said Philip de Comines.—«The Duke of Burgundy, though he claims not at present the title of an independent king, desires nevertheless to be freed in future from the abject marks of subjection required of him to the crown of France;—it is his purpose to close his ducal coronet with an imperial arch, and surmount it with a globe, in emblem that his dominions are independent.»

«And how dares the Duke of Burgundy, the sworn vassal of France,» exclaimed Louis, starting up, and showing an unwonted degree of emotion—«how dares he propose such terms to his Sovereign, as, by every law of Europe, should infer a forfeiture of his fief?»

«The doom of forfeiture it would in this case be difficult to enforce,» answered d'Argenton, calmly.—«Your Majesty is aware that the strict interpretation of the feudal law is becoming obsolete even in the Empire, and

that superior and vassal endeavour to mend their situation in regard to each other, as they have power and opportunity.—Your Majesty's interferences with the Duke's vassal in Flanders will prove an exculpation of my master's conduct, supposing him to insist that, by enlarging his independence, France should in future be debarred from any pretext of doing so.»

« D'Argenton, d'Argenton!» said Louis, arising again, and pacing the room in a pensive manner, « this is a dreadful lesson on the text *Væ victis!*—You cannot mean that the Duke will insist on all these hard conditions?»

« At least I would have your Majesty be in a condition to discuss them all.»

« Yet moderation, d'Argenton, moderation in success, is—no one knows better than you—necessary to its ultimate advantage.»

« So please your Majesty, the merit of moderation is, I have observed, most apt to be extolled by the losing party. The winner holds in more esteem the prudence which calls on him not to leave an opportunity unimproved.»

« Well, we will consider— » replied the King, « but at least thou hast reached the extremity of your Duke's unreasonable exaction? there can remain nothing—or if there does, for so thy brow intimates—What is it—what indeed can it be—-unless it be my crown? which these

previous demands, if granted, will deprive of all its lustre!»

«My lord,» said d'Argenton, «what remains to be mentioned, is a thing partly—indeed in a great measure—within the Duke's own power, though he means to invite your Majesty's accession to it, for in truth it touches you nearly.»

«*Pasques-Dieu!*» exclaimed the King, impatiently, «what is it?—Speak out, Sir Philip—am I to send him my daughter for a concubine, or what other dishonour is he to put on me?»

«No dishonour, my liege; but your Majesty's cousin, the illustrious Duke of Orleans——»

«Ha!» exclaimed the King; but d'Argenton proceeded without heeding the interruption.

«—Having conferred his affections on the young Countess Isabelle de Croye, the Duke expects your Majesty will, on your part, as he on his, yield your assent to the marriage, and unite with him in endowing the right noble couple with such an appanage as, joined to the countess's estates, may form a fit establishment for a Child of France.»

«Never, never!» said the King, bursting out into that emotion which he had of late suppressed with much difficulty, and striding about in a disordered haste, which formed the strongest contrast to the self-command which he usually

exhibited.—«Never, never!—let them bring scissars, and shear my hair like that of the parish-fool, whom I have so richly resembled! let them bid the monastery or the grave yawn for me—let them bring red-hot basins to sear my eyes—axe or aconite—whatever they will—but Orleans shall not break his plighted faith to my daughter, or marry another while she lives!»

«Your Majesty,» said d'Argenton, «ere you set your mind so keenly against what is proposed, will consider your own want of power to prevent it. Every wise man, when he sees a rock giving way, withdraws from the bootless attempt of preventing the fall.»

«But a brave man,» said Louis, «will at least find his grave beneath it—D'Argenton, consider the great loss—the utter destruction, such a marriage will bring upon my kingdom. Recollect, I have but one feeble boy, and this Orleans is the next heir—consider that the church hath consented to his union with Joan, which unites so happily the interests of both branches of my family,—think on all this, and think too that this union has been the favourite scheme of my whole life—that I have schemed for it, fought for it, watched for it, prayed for it,—and sinned for it. Philip de Comines, I will not forego it! Think, man, think!—pity me in this extremity—thy quick brain can speedily find some substitute for this sacrifice—

some ram to be offered up instead of that which is dear to me as the Patriarch's only son was to him. Philip, pity me!—you, at least, should know, that to men of judgment and foresight, the destruction of the scheme on which they have long dwelt, and for which they have long toiled, is more inexpressibly bitter than the transient grief of ordinary men, whose pursuits are but the gratification of some temporary passion—you, who know how to sympathize with the deeper, the more genuine distress of baffled prudence and disappointed sagacity,—will you not feel for me?»

«My Lord and King!» replied d'Argenton, «I do sympathize with your distress, in so far as duty to my master——»

«Do not mention him!» said Louis, acting, or at least appearing to act, under an irresistible and headlong impulse, which withdrew the usual guard which he maintained over his language—«Charles of Burgundy is unworthy of your attachment. He who can insult and strike his counsellors—he who can distinguish the wisest and most faithful among them, by the opprobrious name of Booted-Head!»——

The wisdom of Philip de Comines did not prevent his having a high sense of personal consequence; and he was so much struck with the words which the King uttered, as it were, in the career of a passion which overleaped ceremony, that he could only reply by repetition

of the words « Booted-Head! It is impossible that my master the Duke could have so termed the servant who has been at his side since he could mount a palfrey—and that too before a foreign monarch!—it is impossible!»

Louis instantly saw the impression he had made, and avoiding alike a tone of condolence, which might have seemed insulting, and one of sympathy, which might have savoured of affectation, he said, with simplicity, and at the same time with dignity, «My misfortunes make me forget my courtesy, else I had not spoken to you of what it must be unpleasant for you to hear. But you have in reply taxed me with having uttered impossibilities—this touches my honour; yet I must submit to the charge, if I tell you not the circumstances which the Duke, laughing until his eyes ran over, assigned for the origin of that opprobrious name, which I will not offend your ears by repeating. Thus, then, it chanced. You, Sir Philip des Comines, were at a hunting-match with the Duke of Burgundy, your master; and when he alighted after the chace, he required your services in drawing off his boots. Reading in your looks, perhaps, some natural resentment of this disparaging treatment, he ordered you to sit down in turn, and rendered you the same office he had just received from you. But offended at your understanding him literally, he no sooner plucked one of your boots off than he brutally

beat it about your head till the blood flowed, exclaiming against the insolence of a subject, who had the presumption to accept of such a service at the hand of his sovereign; and hence he, or his privileged fool Le Glorieux, are in the current habit of distinguishing you by the absurd and ridiculous name of *Tête-bottée*, which makes one of the Duke's most ordinary subjects of pleasantry.»

While Louis thus spoke, he had the double pleasure of galling to the quick the person whom he addressed—an exercise which it was in his nature to enjoy, even where he had not, as in the present case, the apology, that he did so in pure retaliation,—and that of observing that he had at length been able to find a point in d'Argenton's character which might lead him gradually from the interests of Burgundy to those of France. But although the deep resentment which the offended courtier entertained against his master induced him at a future period to exchange the service of Charles for that of Louis, yet, at the present moment, he was contented to throw out only some general hints of his friendly inclination towards France, which he well knew the King would understand how to interpret. And indeed it would be unjust. to stigmatize the memory of the excellent historian with desertion of his master on this occasion, although he was certainly now possessed with sentiments much more

favourable to Louis than when he entered the apartment.

He constrained himself to laugh at the anecdote which Louis had detailed, and then added, « I did not think so trifling a frolic would have dwelt on the mind of the Duke so long as to make it worth telling again. Some such passage there was of drawing off boots and the like, as your Majesty knows that the Duke is fond of rude play; but it has been much exaggerated in his recollection. Let it pass on.»

« Ay, *let* it pass on,» said the King; « it is indeed shame it should have detained us a minute. And now, Sir Philip, I hope you are French so far as to afford me your best counsel in these difficult affairs. You have, I am well aware, the clew to the labyrinth, if you would but impart it.»

« Your Majesty may command my best advice and service,» replied d'Argenton, « under reservation always of my duty to my own master.»

This was nearly what the courtier had before stated; but he now repeated it in a tone so different, that whereas Louis understood from the former declaration, that the reserved duty to Burgundy was the prime thing to be considered, so he now saw clearly that the emphasis was reversed, and that more weight was now given by the speaker to his promise of counsel, than to a restriction which seemed

interposed for the sake of form and consistency. The King resumed his own seat, and compelled d'Argenton to sit by him, listening at the same time to that statesman, as if the words of an oracle sounded in his ears. D'Argenton spoke in that low and impressive tone, which implies at once great sincerity and some caution, and at the same time so slowly, as if he was desirous that the King should weigh and consider each individual word as having its own peculiar and determined meaning. « The things, » he said, « which I have suggested for your Majesty's consideration, harsh as they sound in your ear, are but substitutes for still more violent proposals brought forward in the Duke's councils, by those who are more hostile to your Majesty. And I need scarce remind your Majesty, that the more direct and more violent suggestions find readiest acceptance with our master, who loves brief and dangerous measures better than those that are safe, but at the same time circuitous. »

« I remember—» said the King, « I have seen him swim a river at the risk of drowning, though there was a bridge to be found for riding two hundred yards round. »

« True, Sire; and he that weighs not his life against the gratification of a moment of impetuous passion, will, on the same impulse, prefer the gratification of his will to the increase of his substantial power. »

« Most true, » replied the King; « a fool will ever grasp rather at the appearance than the reality of authority. All this I know to be true of Charles of Burgundy. But, my dear friend d'Argenton, what do you infer from these premises? »

« Simply this, my lord, » answered d'Argenton, « that as your Majesty has seen a skilful angler controul a large and heavy fish, and finally draw him to land by a single hair, which fish had broke through a tackle tenfold stronger, had the fisher presumed to strain the line on him, instead of giving him head enough for all his wild flourishes; even so your Majesty, by gratifying the Duke in these particulars on which he has pitched his ideas of honour, and the gratification of his revenge, may evade many of the other unpalatable propositions at which I have hinted; and which—including, I must state openly to your Majesty, some of those through which France would be most especially weakened—will slide out of his remembrance and attention, and being referred to subsequent conferences and future discussion, may be altogether eluded. »

« I understand you, my good Sir Philip; but to the matter, » said the King. « To which of those happy propositions is your Duke so much wedded, that contradiction will make him unreasonable and untractable? »

« To any or to all of them, if it please your

Majesty, on which you may happen to contradict him. This is precisely what your Majesty must avoid; and, to take up my former parable, you must needs remain on the watch, ready to give the Duke line enough whenever he shoots away under the impulse of his rage. His fury, already considerably abated, will waste itself if he be unopposed, and you will presently find him become more friendly and more tractable.»

« Still,» said the King, musing, « there must be some particular demands which lie deeper at my cousin's heart than the other proposals. Were I but aware of these, Sir Philip——»

« Your Majesty may make the lightest of his demands the most important, simply by opposing it,» said d'Argenton; « nevertheless, my Lord, thus far I can say, that every shadow of treaty will be broken off, if your Majesty renounce not William de la Marck and the Liegeois.»

« I have already said that I will disown them,» said the King, « and well they deserve it at my hand; the villains have commenced their uproar at a moment which might have cost me my life.»

« He that fires a train of powder,» replied d'Argenton, « must expect a speedy explosion of the mine.—But more than mere disavowal of their cause will be expected of your Majesty by Duke Charles; for know, that he will de-

mand your Majesty's assistance to put the insurrection down, and your royal presence to witness the punishment which he destines for the rebels.»

« That may scarce consist with our honour, d'Argenton,» said the King.

« To refuse it will scarce consist with your Majesty's safety,» replied Comines. « Charles is determined to shew the people of Flanders, that no hope, nay no promise, of assistance from France, will save them in their mutinies from the wrath and vengeance of Burgundy.»

« But, d'Argenton, I will speak plainly,» answered the King—« Could we but procrastinate the matter, might not these rogues of Liege make their own part good against Duke Charles? The knaves are numerous and steady—Can they not hold out their town against him?»

«With the help of the thousand archers of France whom your Majesty promised them, they might have done something; but——»

«Whom I promised them!» said the King—«Alas! good Sir Philip! you much wrong me in saying so.»

«—But without whom,» continued d'Argenton, not heeding the interruption,— « as your Majesty will not *now* likely find it convenient to supply them,—what chance will the burghers have in making good their town, in whose walls the large breaches made by Charles after the battle of St Tron are still unrepaired; so that

the lances of Hainault, Brabant, and Burgundy, may advance to the attack twenty men in front?»

«The improvident idiots!» said the King—«If they have thus neglected their own safety, they deserve not my protection. Pass on—I will make no quarrel for their sake.»

«The next point, I fear, will sit closer to your Majesty's heart,» said Des Comines.

«Ah!» replied the King, «you mean that infernal marriage! I will not consent to the breach of the contract betwixt my daughter Joan and my cousin of Orleans—it would be wresting the sceptre of France from me and my posterity; for that feeble boy the Dauphin is a blighted blossom, which will wither without fruit. This match between Joan and Orleans has been my thought by day, my dream by night—I tell thee, d'Argenton, I cannot give it up!—Besides, it is inhuman to require me, with my own hand, to destroy at once my own scheme of policy, and the happiness of a pair brought up for each other.»

«Are they then so much attached?» said d'Argenton.

«One of them at least is, «said the King. «and the one for whom I am bound to be most anxious. But you smile, Sir Philip—you are no believer in the force of love.»

«Nay,« said d'Argenton,» if it please you, Sire, I am so little an infidel in that particular,

that I was about to ask whether it would reconcile you in any degree to your acquiescing in the proposed marriage betwixt the Duke of Orleans and Isabelle de Croye, were I to satisfy you that the countess's inclinations are so much fixed on another, that it is likely it will never be a match?»

King Louis sighed.—«Alas!» he said, «my good and dear friend, from what sepulchre have you drawn such dead man's comfort? *Her* inclination, indeed!—Why, to speak truth, supposing that Orleans detested my daughter Joan, yet but for this ill-ravelled web of mischance, he must needs have married her; so you may conjecture how little chance there is of this damsel being able to refuse him under a similar compulsion, and he a Child of France besides.—Ah, no, Philip!—little fear of her standing obstinate against the suit of such a lover.—*Varium et mutabile*, Philip.»

«Your Majesty may, in the present instance, undervalue the obstinate courage of this young lady. She comes of a race determinately wilful; and I have picked out of Crevecœur that she has formed a romantic attachment to a young squire, who, to say truth, rendered her many services on the road.»

«Ha!» said the King—«an archer of my Guards, by name Quentin Durward?»

«The same, as I think,» said d'Argenton;

«he was made prisoner along with the countess, travelling almost alone together.»

«Now, Our Lord and Our Lady, and Monseigneur Saint Martin, and Monseigneur Saint Julian, be praised every one of them!» said the King, «and all laud and honour to the learned Galeotti, who read in the stars that this youth's destiny was connected with mine! If the maiden be so attached to him as to make her refractory to the will of Burgundy, this Quentin hath indeed been rarely useful to me.»

«I believe, my Lord, in Crevecœur's report, that there is some chance of her being sufficiently obstinate; besides, doubtless, the noble duke himself, notwithstanding what your Majesty was pleased to hint in way of supposition, will not willingly renounce his fair cousin, to whom he has been long engaged.»

«Umph!» answered the King — «But you have never seen my daughter Joan.—An owlet, man!—an absolute owl, whom I am ashamed of! But let him be only a wise man, and marry her, I will give him leave to be mad *par amours* for the fairest lady in France.—And now, Philip, have you given me the full map of your master's mind?»

«I have possessed you, Sire, of those particulars on which he is at present most disposed to insist. But your Majesty well knows that the Duke's disposition is like a sweeping torrent, which only passes smoothly forward

when its waves encounter no opposition; and what may be presented to chafe him into fury, it is impossible even to guess. Were more distinct evidence of your Majesty's practices (pardon the phrase, where there is so little time for ceremony), with the Liegeois and William de la Marck to occur unexpectedly, the issue might be terrible.—There are strange news from that country—they say La Marck hath married Hameline, the elder Countess of Croye.»

«That old fool was so mad on marriage, that she would have accepted the hand of Satan,» said the King; «but that La Marck, beast as he is, should have married her, rather more surprises me.»

«There is a report also,» continued Comines, «that an envoy, or herald, on La Marck's part, is approaching Peronne;—this is like to drive the Duke frantic with rage—I trust that he has no letters, or the like, to show on your Majesty's part?»

«Letters to a Wild Boar!» answered the King. —«No, no, Sir Philip, I was no such fool as to cast pearls before swine—What little intercourse I had with the brute animal was by message, in which I always employed such low-bred slaves and vagabonds, that their evidence would not be received in a trial for robbing a hen-roost.»

«I can then only further recommend,» said

d'Argenton, taking his leave, «that your Majesty should remain on your guard, be guided by events, and, above all, avoid using any language or argument with the Duke which may better become your dignity than your present condition.»

«If my dignity,» said the King, «grow troublesome to me,—which it seldom doth while there are deeper interests to think of,—I have a special remedy for that swelling of the heart —It is but looking into a ruinous closet, Sir Philip, and thinking of the death of Charles the Simple; and it cures me as effectually as the cold bath would cool a fever.—And now, my friend and monitor, must thou be gone? Well, Sir Philip, the time must come when thou wilt tire reading lessons of state policy to the Bull of Burgundy, who is incapable of comprehending your most simple argument— If Louis of Valois then lives, thou hast a friend in the court of France. I tell thee, my Philip, it would be a blessing to my kingdom should I ever acquire thee; who, with a profound view of subjects of state, hast also a conscience capable of feeling and discerning between right and wrong. So help me, Our Lord and Lady, and Monseigneur Saint Martin, Oliver and Balue have hearts as hardened as the nether mill-stone; and my life is embittered by remorse and penances for the crimes they make me commit. Thou, Sir Philip,

possessed of the wisdom of present and past times, canst teach how to become great without ceasing to be virtuous.»

«A hard task, and which few have attained,» said the historian; «but which is yet within the reach of princes who will strive for it. Meantime, Sire, be prepared, for the Duke will presently confer with you.»

Louis looked long after Philip when he left the apartment, and at length burst into a bitter laugh. «He spoke of fishing—I have sent him home, a trout properly tickled!—And he thinks himself virtuous because he took no bribe, but contented himself with flattery and promises, and the pleasure of avenging an affront to his vanity!—Why, he is but so much the poorer for the refusal of the money—not a jot the more honest. He must be mine though, for he hath the shrewdest head among them. Well, now for a nobler game! I must face this leviathan Charles, who will presently swim hitherward, cleaving the deep before him. I must, like a trembling sailor, throw a tub overboard to amuse him. But I may one day find the chance—of driving a harpoon into his entrails.»

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INTERVIEW.

Hold fast thy truth, young soldier.—Gentle maiden,
Keep you your promise plight—leave age its subtleties,
And grey-hair'd policy its maze of falsehood;
But be you candid as the morning sky,
Ere the high sun sucks vapours up to stain it.

The Trial.

On the perilous and important morning which preceded the meeting of the two princes in the Castle of Peronne, Oliver le Dain did his master the service of an active and skilful agent, making interest for Louis in every quarter, both with presents and promises; so that when the Duke's anger should blaze forth, all around should be interested to smother, and not to increase the conflagration. He glided like night, from tent to tent, from house to house, making himself friends, but not in the apostle's sense, with the Mammon of unrighteousness. As was said of another active political agent, « his finger was in every man's palm, his mouth was

in every man's ear;» and for various reasons, some of which we have formerly hinted at, he secured the favour of many Burgundian nobles, who either had something to hope or fear from France, or who thought that, were the power of Louis too much reduced, their own Duke would be likely to pursue the road to despotic authority, to which his heart naturally inclined him, with a daring and unopposed pace.

Where Oliver thought his own presence or arguments might be less acceptable, he employed that of other servants of the King; and it was in this manner that he obtained, by the favour of the Count de Crevecœur, an interview betwixt Lord Crawford, accompanied by Le Balafré, and Quentin Durward, who, since he had arrived at Peronne, had been detained in a sort of honourable confinement. Private affairs were assigned as the cause of requesting this meeting; but it is probable that Crevecœur, who was afraid that his master might be stirred up in a passion to do something dishonourably violent towards Louis, was not sorry to afford an opportunity to Crawford to give some hints to the young Archer, which might prove useful to his master.

The meeting between the countrymen was cordial and even affecting.

« Thou art a singular youth, » said Crawford, stroking the head of young Durward, as a

grandsire might do that of his descendant; « Certes, you have had as meikle good fortune as if you had been born with a lucky-hood on your head.»

« All comes of his gaining an Archer's place at such early years,» said Le Balafré; « I never was so much talked of, fair nephew, because I was five-and-twenty years old before I was *hors de page*.»

« And an ill-looking mountainous monster of a page thou wert, Ludovic,» said the old commander, « with a beard like a baker's shool, and a back like old Wallace Wight.»

« I fear,» said Quentin, with downcast eyes, « I shall enjoy that title to distinction but a short time—since it is my purpose to resign the service of the Archer-guard.»

Le Balafré was struck almost mute with astonishment, and Crawford's ancient features gleamed with displeasure. The former at length mustered words enough to say, «Resign! —leave your place in the Scottish Archers!— such a thing was never dreamed of.—I would not give up my situation, to be made Constable of France.»

« Hush! Ludovic,» said Crawford; « this youngster knows better how to shape his course with the wind than we of the old world do. His journey hath given him some pretty tales to tell about King Louis; and he is turning

Burgundian, that he may make his own little profit by telling them to Duke Charles.»

«If I thought so,» said Le Balafré, «I would cut his throat with my own hand, were he fifty times my sister's son.»

«But you would first inquire whether I deserved to be so treated, fair kinsman?» answered Quentin;— «and you, my lord, know that I am no tale-bearer; nor shall either question or torture draw out of me a word to King Louis's prejudice, which may have come to my knowledge while I was in his service.— So far my oath of duty keeps me silent. But I will not remain in that service, in which, besides the perils of fair battle with mine enemies, I am to be exposed to the dangers of ambuscade on the part of my friends.»

«Nay, if he objects to lying in ambuscade,» said Le Balafré, looking sorrowfully at the Lord Crawford, «I am afraid, my lord, that all is over with him! I myself have had thirty bushments break upon me; and truly I think I have laid in ambuscade twice as often myself, it being a favourite practice in our King's mode of making war.»

«It is so, indeed, Ludovic,» answered Lord Crawford; «nevertheless, hold your peace, for I believe I understand this gear better than you do.»

«I wish to Our Lady you may, my lord,» answered Ludovic; «but it wounds me to the very

midriff, to think my sister's son should fear an ambushment.»

«Young man,» said Crawford, «I partly guess your meaning. You have met foul play on the road where you travelled by the King's command, and you think you have reason to charge him with being the author of it.»

«I have been threatened with foul play in the execution of the King's commission; but I have had the good fortune to elude it—whether his Majesty be innocent or guilty in the matter, I leave to God and his own conscience. He fed me when I was a-hungered—received me when I was a wandering stranger. I will never load him in his adversity with accusations which may indeed be unjust, since I heard them only from the vilest mouths.»

«My dear boy—my own lad!» said Crawford, taking him in his arms—«Ye think like a Scot every joint of you!—Like one that will forget a cause of quarrel with a friend whose back is already at the wall, and remember nothing of him but his kindness.»

«Since my Lord Crawford has embraced my nephew,» said Ludovic Leslie, «I will embrace him also—though I would have you to know, that to understand the service of an ambushment is as necessary to a soldier, as it is to a priest to be able to read his breviary.»

«Be hushed, Ludovic,» said Crawford; «ye are an ass, my friend, and ken not the blessing

Heaven has sent you in this braw callant.—And now tell me, Quentin my man, hath the King any advice of this brave, Christian, and manly resolution of yours? for, poor man, he had need in his strait to ken what he has to reckon upon. Had he but brought the whole brigade of Guards with him!—But God's will be done — Kens he of your purpose, think you?»

«I really can hardly tell,» answered Quentin; «but I assured his learned astrologer, Martius Galeotti, of my resolution to be silent on all that could injure the King with the Duke of Burgundy. The particulars which I suspect, I will not (under your favour) communicate even to your lordship; and to the philosopher I was, of course, far less willing to unfold myself.»

«Ha!—ay!—» answered Lord Crawford—«Oliver did indeed tell me that Galeotti prophesied most stoutly concerning the line of conduct you were to hold; and I am truly glad to find he did so on better authority than the stars.»

«*He* prophesy!» said Le Balafré, laughing; «the stars never told him that honest Ludovic Leslie used to help yonder wench of his to spend the fair ducats he flings into her lap.»

«Hush! Ludovic,» said his captain, «hush! thou beast, man!—If thou dost not respect my grey hairs, because I have been e'en too much

of a *routier* myself, respect the boy's youth and innocence, and let us have no more of such unbecoming daffing.»

«Your honour may say your pleasure,» answered Ludovic Leslie; «but, by my faith, second-sighted Saunders Souplejaw, the town-souter of Glen-houlakin, was worth Galloti, or Gallipoty, or whatever ye call him, twice told for a prophet. He foretold that all my sister's children would die some day; and he foretold it in the very hour that the youngest was born, and that is this lad Quentin—who, no doubt, will one day die, to make up the prophecy—the more's the pity—the whole curney of them is gone but himself. And Saunders foretold to myself one day, that I should be made by marriage, which doubtless will also happen in due time, though it hath not yet come to pass—though how or when I can hardly guess, as I care not myself for the wedded state, and Quentin is but a lad. Also, Saunders predicted——»

«Nay,» said Lord Crawford, «unless the prediction be singularly to the purpose, I must cut you short, my good Ludovic, for both you and I must now leave your nephew, with prayers to Our Lady to strengthen him in the good mind he is in; for this is a case in which a light word might do more mischief than all the parliament of Paris could mend.—My blessing with you, my lad; and be in no hurry to

think of leaving our body, for there will be good blows going presently in the eye of day, and no ambuscade.»

«And my blessing too, nephew,» said Ludovic Leslie; «for since you have satisfied our most noble captain, I also am satisfied, as in duty bound.»

«Stay, my lord,» said Quentin, and led Lord Crawford a little apart from his uncle. «I must not forget to mention, that there is a person besides in the world, who, having learned from me these circumstances, which it is essential to King Louis's safety should at present remain concealed, may not think that the same obligation of secrecy which attaches to me as the King's soldier, and as having been relieved by his bounty, is at all binding on her.»

«On *her!*» replied Crawford; «nay, if there be a woman in the secret, the Lord ha' mercy, for we are all on the rocks again!»

«Do not suppose so, my lord,» replied Durward, «but use your interest with the Count of Crevecœur to permit me an interview with the Countess Isabelle of Croye, who is the party possessed of my secret, and I doubt not that I can persuade her to be as silent as I shall unquestionably myself remain, concerning whatsoever may incense the Duke against King Louis.»

The old soldier mused for a long time—

looked up to the ceiling, then down again upon the floor—then shook his head,—and at length said, «There is something in all this, which, by my honour, I do not understand. The Countess Isabelle of Croye!—an interview with a lady of her birth, blood, and possessions! —and thou, a raw Scottish lad, so certain of carrying thy point with her? Thou art either strangely confident, my young friend, or else you have used your time well upon the journey. But, by the Cross of Saint Andrew! I will move Crevecœur in thy behalf; and, as he truly fears that Duke Charles may be provoked against the King to the extremity of falling foul, I think it likely he may grant thy request, though, by my honour, it is a comical one!»

So saying, and shrugging up his shoulders, the old lord left the apartment, followed by Ludovic Leslie, who, forming his looks on those of his principal, endeavoured, though knowing nothing of the cause of his wonder, to look as mysterious and important as Crawford himself.

In a few minutes Crawford returned, but without his attendant Le Balafré. The old man seemed in singular humour, laughing and chuckling to himself in a manner which strangely distorted his old and rigid features, and at the same time shaking his head, as at something which he could not help condemning, while he found it irresistibly ludicrous. «My

certes, countryman,» said he, «but you are not blate—you will never lose fair lady for faint heart! Crevecœur swallowed your proposal as he would have done a cup of vinegar, and swore to me roundly, by all the saints in Burgundy, that, but that the honour of princes and the peace of kingdoms were at stake, you should never see even so much as the print of the Countess Isabelle's foot on the clay. Were it not that he had a dame, and a fair one, I would have thought that he meant to break a lance for the prize himself. Perhaps he thinks of his nephew, the County Stephen. A countess!—would no less serve you to be minting at?—But come along—your interview with her must be brief—But I fancy you know how to make the most of little time!— ho! ho! ho! —By my faith, I can hardly chide thee for the presumption, I have such a good will to laugh at it!»

With a brow like scarlet, at once offended and disconcerted by the blunt inferences of the old soldier, and vexed at beholding in what an absurd light his passion was viewed by every person of experience, Durward followed Lord Crawford in silence to the Ursuline convent in which the countess was lodged, and in the parlour of which he found the Count de Crevecœur.

«So, young gallant,» said the latter, sternly,

«you must see the fair companion of your romantic expedition once more, it seems?»

«Yes, my lord count,» answered Quentin, firmly; «and, what is more, I must see her alone.»

«That shall never be,» said the Count de Crevecœur. «Lord Crawford, I make you judge. This young lady, the daughter of my old friend and companion in arms, the richest heiress in Burgundy, has confessed a sort of a—what was I going to say?—in short, she is a fool, and your man-at-arms here a presumptuous coxcomb—In a word, they shall not meet alone.»

«Then will I not speak a single word to the countess in your presence,» said Quentin, much delighted. «You have told me much that I did not dare, presumptuous as I may be, even to hope.»

«Ay, truly said, my friend,» said Crawford. «You have been imprudent in your communications; and since you refer to me, and there is a good stout grating across the parlour, I would advise you to trust to it, and let them do the worst with their tongues. What, man! the life of a King, and many thousands besides, is not to be weighed with the chance of two young things whilly-whawing in ilk other's ears for a minute.»

So saying, he dragged off Crevecœur, who followed very reluctantly, and casting many

angry glances at the young archer as he left the room.

In a moment after, the Countess Isabelle entered on the other side of the grate, and no sooner saw Quentin alone in the parlour; than she stopped short, and cast her eye on the ground for the space of half a minute. «Yet why should I be ungrateful,» she said, «because others are unjustly suspicious?—My friend—my preserver, I may almost say, so much have I been beset by treachery—my only faithful and constant friend!»

As she spoke thus, she extended her hand to him through the grate, nay, suffered him to retain it, until he had covered it with kisses, not unmingled with tears. She only said, «Durward, were we ever to meet again, I would not permit this folly.»

If it be considered that Quentin had guarded her through so many perils—that he had been, in truth, her only faithful and zealous protector, perhaps my fair readers, even if countesses and heiresses should be of the number, will pardon the derogation.

But the countess extricated her hand at length, and stepping a pace back from the grate, asked Durward, in a very embarrassed tone, what boon he had to ask of her?—«For that you have a request to make, I have learned from the old Scottish lord, who came here but now with my cousin of Crevecœur. Let it be

but reasonable,» she said, «but such as poor Isabelle can grant with duty and honour uninfringed, and you cannot tax my slender powers too highly. But, O! do not speak hastily—do not say,» she added, looking around with timidity, «aught that might, if overheard, do prejudice to us both.»

«Fear not, noble lady,» said Quentin, sorrowfully; «it is not *here* that I can forget the distance which fate has placed between us, or expose you to the censures of your proud kindred, as the object of the most devoted love to one, poorer and less powerful—not perhaps less noble than themselves. Let that pass like a dream of the night to all but one bosom, where, dream as it is, it will fill up the room of all existing realities.»

«Hush! hush!» said Isabelle; «for your own sake,—for mine,—be silent on such a theme. Tell me rather what it is you have to ask of me.»

«Forgiveness to one, who, for his own selfish views, hath conducted himself as your enemy.»

«I trust I forgive all my enemies,» answered Isabelle; «but oh, Durward! through what scenes has your courage and presence of mind protected me!—Yonder bloody hall—the good bishop—I knew not till yesterday half the horrors I had unconsciously witnessed!»

«Do not think on them,» said Quentin, who

saw the transient colour which had come to her cheek during their conference, fast fading into the most deadly paleness— Do not look back, but look steadily forward, as they needs must who walk in a perilous road. Hearken to me. King Louis deserves nothing better at your hand, of all others, than to be proclaimed the wily and insidious politician which he really is. But to tax him as the encourager of your flight —still more as the author of a plan to throw you into the hands of De la Marck—will at this moment produce perhaps the King's death or dethronement; and, at all events, the most bloody war between France and Burgundy which the two countries have ever been engaged in.»

« These evils shall not arrive for my sake, if they can be prevented,» said the Countess Isabelle; « and indeed your slightest request were enough to make me forego my revenge, were that at any time a passion which I deeply cherish. Is it possible I would rather remember King Louis's injuries than your invaluable services?—Yet how is this to be? When I am called before my sovereign, the Duke of Burgundy, I must either stand silent, or speak the truth. The former would be contumacity; and to a false tale you will not desire me to train my tongue.»

« Surely not,» said Durward; « but let your evidence concerning Louis be confined to what

you yourself positively know to be truth; and when you mention what others have reported, no matter how credibly, let it be as reports only, and beware of pledging your own personal evidence to that which, though you may fully believe, you cannot personally know. The assembled council of Burgundy cannot refuse to a monarch the justice, which in my country is rendered to the meanest person under accusation. They must esteem him innocent, until direct and sufficient proof shall demonstrate his guilt. Now, what does not consist with your own certain knowledge, should be proved by other evidence than your report from hearsay.»

« I think I understand you,» said the Countess Isabelle.

« I will make my meaning plainer,» said Quentin, and was illustrating it accordingly by more than one instance, when the convent-bell tolled.

« That,» said the countess, « is a signal that we must part—part for ever!—But do not forget me, Durward; I will never forget you—your faithful services———»

(She could not speak more, but again extended her hand, which was again pressed to his lips; and I know not how it was, that, in endeavouring to withdraw her hand, the countess came so close to the grating, that Quentin was encouraged to press the adieu on her lips.

The young lady did not chide him—perhaps there was no time, for Crevecœur and Crawford, who had been from some loop-hole eye-witnesses, if not ear-witnesses also, of what was passing, rushed into the apartment, the first in a towering passion, the latter laughing, and holding him back.

« To your chamber, young mistress—to your chamber,» exclaimed the count to Isabelle, who, flinging down her veil, retired in all haste, —« which should be exchanged for a cell, and bread and water.—And you, gentle sir, who are so malapert, the time will come when the interest of kings and kingdoms may not be connected with such as you are, and you shall then learn the penalty of your audacity in raising your beggarly eyes——»

« Hush! hush!—enough said—rein up—rein up,» said the old lord;—« and you, Quentin, I command you, be silent, and begone to your quarters.—There is no such room for scorn neither, Sir Count of Crevecœur—Quentin Durward is as much a gentleman as the King, only, as the Spaniard says, not so rich. He is as noble as myself, and I am chief of my name. Tush, tush, man, you must not speak to us of penalties.»

« My lord, my lord,» said Crevecœur, impatiently, « the insolence of these foreign mercenaries is proverbial, and should receive rather

rebuke than encouragement from you, who are their leader.

« My lord count, » answered Crawford, « I have ordered my command for these fifty years, without advice either from Frenchman or Burgundian; and I intend to do so, under your favour, so long as I shall continue to hold it. »

« Well, well, my lord, » said Crevecœur, « I meant you no disrespect; your nobleness, as well as your age, entitle you to be privileged in your impatience; and for these young people, I am satisfied to overlook the past, since I will take care that they never meet again. »

« Do not take that upon your salvation, Crevecœur, » said the old lord, laughing; « mountains, it is said, may meet, and why not mortal creatures that have legs, and life and love to put those legs in motion? Yon kiss, Crevecœur, came tenderly off—methinks it was ominous. »

« You are striving again to disturb my patience, » said Crevecœur, « but I will not give you that advantage over me. Hark! they toll the summons to the castle—an awful meeting, of which God only can foretel the issue. »

« This issue I can foretel, » said the old Scottish lord, « that if violence is to be offered to the person of the King, few as his friends are,

and surrounded by his enemies, he shall neither fall alone nor unavenged; and grieved I am, that his own positive orders have prevented my taking measures to prepare for such an issue.»

« My Lord of Crawford,» said the Burgundian, « to anticipate such evil is the sure way to give occasion to it. Obey the orders of your royal master, and give no pretext for violence by taking hasty offence, and you will find that the day will pass over more smoothly than you now conjecture.»

CHAPTER IX.

THE INVESTIGATION.

Me rather had, my heart might feel your love.
Than my displeased eye see your courtesy.
Up, cousin, up—your heart is up, I know,
***Thus* high at least—although your knee—**

King Richard II.

At the first toll of the bell, which was to summon the great nobles of Burgundy together in council, with the very few French peers who were to be present on the occasion, Duke Charles, followed by a part of his train, armed with partizans and battle-axes, entered the hall of Herbert's Tower, in the Castle of Peronne. King Louis, who had expected the visit, arose and made two steps towards the Duke, and then remained standing with an air of dignity, which, in spite of the meanness of his dress, and the familiarity of his ordinary manners, he knew very well how to assume when he judged it necessary. Upon the present important crisis, the composure of his demeanour had an

evident effect upon his rival, who changed the abrupt and hasty step with which he entered the apartment, into one more becoming a great vassal entering the presence of his lord paramount. Apparently the Duke had formed the internal resolution to treat Louis, in the outset at least, with the formalities due to his high station; but at the same time it was evident, that, in doing so, he put no small constraint upon the fiery impatience of his own disposition, and was scarce able to controul the feelings of resentment, and the thirst of revenge, which boiled in his bosom. Hence, though he compelled himself to use the outward acts, and in some degree the language, of courtesy and reverence, his colour came and went rapidly—his voice was abrupt, hoarse, and broken—his limbs shook, as impatient of the curb imposed on his motions—he frowned, and bit his lip until the blood came—and every look and movement showed that the most passionate prince who ever lived was under the dominion of one of his most violent accesses of fury.

The King marked this war of passion with a calm and untroubled eye; for, though he gathered from the Duke's looks a foretaste of the bitterness of death, which he dreaded alike as a mortal and a sinful man, yet he was resolved, like a wary and skilful pilot, neither to suffer himself to be disconcerted by his own

fears, nor to abandon the helm, while there was a chance of saving the vessel. When the Duke, in a hoarse and broken tone, said something of the scarcity of his accommodations, he answered with a smile, that he could not complain, since he had as yet found Herbert's Tower a better residence than it had proved to one of his ancestors.

« They told you the tradition then?» said Charles—« Yes—here he was slain—but it was because he refused to take the cowl, and finish his days in a monastery.»

« The more fool he,» said Louis, affecting unconcern, « since he gained the torment of being a martyr, without the merit of being a saint.»

« I come,» said the Duke, « to pray your Majesty to attend a high council, at which things of weight are to be deliberated upon concerning the welfare of France and Burgundy. You will presently meet them—that is, if such be your pleasure—»

« Nay, my fair cousin,» said the King, « never strain courtesy so far, as to entreat what you may so boldly command—To council, since such is your grace's pleasure. We are somewhat shorn of our train,» he added, looking upon the small suite that arranged themselves to attend him—« but you; cousin, must shine out for us both.»

Marshalled by Toison d'Or, chief of the he-

ralds of Burgundy, the princes left the Earl Herbert's Tower, and entered the castle-yard, which Louis observed was filled with the Duke's body-guard and men-at-arms, splendidly accoutred, and drawn up in martial array. Crossing the court, they entered the council-hall, which was in a much more modern part of the building than that of which Louis had been the tenant, and, though in disrepair, had been hastily arranged for the solemnity of a public council. Two chairs of state were erected under the same canopy, that for the King being raised two steps higher than that which the Duke was to occupy; about twenty of the chief nobility sate, arranged in due order, on either hand of the chairs of state; and thus, when they were both seated, the person for whose trial, as it might be called, the council was summoned, held the highest place, and appeared to preside in it.

It was perhaps to get rid of this inconsistency, and the scruples which might have been inspired by it, that Duke Charles, having bowed slightly to the royal chair, bluntly opened the sitting with the following words:—

« My good vassals and counsellors, it is not unknown to you what disturbances have arisen in our territories, both in our father's time, and in our own, from the rebellion of vassals against superiors, and subjects against their princes. And lately, we have had the most

dreadful proof of the height to which these evils have arrived in our case, by the scandalous flight of the Countess Isabelle of Croye, and her aunt the Lady Hameline, to take refuge with a foreign power, thereby renouncing their fealty to us, and inferring the forfeiture of their fiefs; and in another more dreadful and deplorable instance, by the sacrilegious and bloody murder of our beloved brother and ally the Bishop of Liege, and the rebellion of that treacherous city, which was but too mildly punished for the last insurrection. We have been informed that these sad events may be traced, not merely to the inconstancy and folly of women, and the presumption of pampered citizens, but to the agency of foreign power, and the interference of a mighty neighbour, from whom, if good deeds could merit any return in kind, Burgundy could have expected nothing but the most sincere and devoted friendship. If this should prove truth,» said the Duke, setting his teeth, and pressing his heel against the ground, « what consideration shall withhold us—the means being in our power—from taking such measures, as shall effectually, and at the very source, close up the main spring, from which these evils have yearly flowed on us?»

The Duke had begun his speech with some calmness, but he elevated his voice at the conclusion; and the last sentence was spoken

in a tone which made all the counsellors tremble, and brought a transient fit of paleness across the King's cheek. He instantly recalled his courage, however, and addressed the council in his turn, in a tone evincing so much ease and composure, that the Duke, though he seemed desirous to interrupt or stop him, found no decent opportunity to do so.

«Nobles of France and of Burgundy,» he said, «Knights of the Holy Spirit and of the Golden Fleece! since a King must plead his cause as an accused person, he cannot desire nobler judges, than the flower of nobleness, and muster and pride of chivalry. Our fair cousin of Burgundy hath but darkened the dispute between us, in so far as his courtesy has declined to state it in precise terms. I, who have no cause for observing such delicacy, nay, whose condition permits me not to do so, crave leave to speak more precisely. It is to us, my lords—to us, his liege lord, his kinsman, his ally, that unhappy circumstances, perverting our cousin's clear judgment and better nature, have induced him to apply the hateful charges of seducing his vassals from their allegiance, stirring up the people of Liege to revolt, and stimulating the outlawed William de la Marck to commit a most cruel and sacrilegious murder. Nobles of France and Burgundy, I might truly appeal to the circumstances in which I now stand, as being in themselves a complete

contradiction of such an accusation; for is it to be supposed, that, having the sense of a rational being left me, I should have thrown myself unreserveldy into the power of the Duke of Burgundy, while I was practising treachery against him, such as could not fail to be discovered, and which, being discovered, must place me, as I now stand, in the power of a justly exasperated prince? The folly of one who should seat himself quietly down to repose on a mine, after he had lighted the match which was to cause instant explosion, would have been wisdom compared to mine. I have no doubt that, amongst the perpetrators of those horrible treasons at Schonwaldt, villains have been busy with my name—but am I to be answerable, who have given them no right to use it?—If two silly women, disgusted on account of some romantic cause of displeasure, sought refuge at my court, does it follow that they did so by my direction?—It will be found, when inquired into, that, since honour and chivalry forbade my sending them back prisoners to the court of Burgundy,—which I think, gentlemen, no one who wears the collar of these orders would suggest,—that I came as nearly as possible to the same point, by placing them in the hands of the venerable father in God, who is now a saint in heaven.»—Here Louis seemed much affected, and pressed his kerchief to his eyes—« In the hands, I say, of

a member of my own family, and still more closely united with that of Burgundy, whose situation, exalted condition in the church, and, alas! whose numerous virtues, qualified him to be the protector of these unhappy wanderers for a little while, and the mediator betwixt them and their liege lord. I say, therefore, the only circumstances which seem, in my brother of Burgundy's hasty view of this subject, to argue unworthy suspicions against me, are such as can be explained on the fairest and most honourable motives; and I say, moreover, that no one particle of credible evidence can be brought to support the injurious charges which have induced my brother to alter his friendly looks towards one who came to him in full confidence of friendship, have caused him to turn his festive hall into a court of justice, and his hospitable apartments into a prison.»

«My lord, my lord,» said Charles, breaking in so soon as the King paused, «for your being here at a time so unluckily coinciding with the execution of your projects, I can only account by supposing, that those who make it their trade to impose on others, do sometimes egregiously delude themselves. The engineer is sometimes killed by the springing of his own petard.—For what is to follow, let it depend on the event of this solemn inquiry.—Bring hither the Countess Isabelle of Croye!»

As the young lady was introduced, supported on the one side by the Countess of Crevecœur, who had her husband's commands to that effect, and on the other by the abbess of the Ursuline convent, Charles exclaimed, with his usual harshness of voice and manner,—«Soh! sweet princess—you, who could scarce find breath to answer us when we last laid our just and reasonable commands on you, yet have had wind enough to run as long a course as ever did hunted doe—what think you of the fair work you have made between two great princes, and two mighty countries, that have been like to go to war for your baby face?»

The publicity of the scene, and the violence of Charles's manner, totally overcame the resolution which Isabelle had formed of throwing herself at the Duke's feet, and imploring him to take possession of her estates, and permit her to retire into a cloister. She stood motionless like a terrified female in a storm, who hears the thunder roll on every side of her, and apprehends, in every fresh peal, the bolt which is to strike her dead. The countess of Crevecœur, a woman of spirit equal to her birth and to the beauty which she preserved even in her matronly years, judged it necessary to interfere. «My lord Duke,» she said, «my fair cousin is under my protection. I know better than your grace how women should be treated, and we will leave this pre-

sence instantly, unless you use a tone and language more suitable to our rank and sex.»

The Duke burst out into a laugh. « Crevecœur,» he said, « thy tameness hath made a lordly dame of thy countess; but that is no affair of mine. Give a seat to yonder simple girl, to whom, so far from feeling enmity, I design the highest grace and honour.—Sit down, mistress, and tell us at your leisure what fiend possessed you to fly from your native country, and embrace the trade of a damsel adventurous.»

With much pain, and not without several interruptions, Isabelle confessed, that, being absolutely determined against a match proposed to her by the Duke of Burgundy, she had indulged the hope of obtaining protection of the court of France.

« And under protection of the French Monarch,» said Charles—« Of that, doubtless, you were well assured?»

« I did indeed so think myself assured,» said the Countess Isabelle, « otherwise I had not taken a step so decided.»—Here Charles looked upon Louis with a smile of inexpressible bitterness, which the King supported with the utmost firmness, excepting that his lip grew something whiter than it was wont to be.—« But my information concerning King Louis's intentions towards us,» continued the countess, after a short pause, « was almost entirely

derived from my unhappy aunt, the lady Hameline, and her opinions were formed upon the assertions and insinuations of persons whom I have since discovered to be the vilest traitors, and most faithless wretches in the world.» She then stated, in brief terms, what she had since come to learn of the treachery of Marthon, and of Hayraddin Maugrabin, and added, that she «entertained no doubt that the elder Maugrabin, callet Zamet, the original adviser of their flight, was capable of every species of treachery, as well as of assuming the character of an agent of Louis without authority.»

There was a pause while the countess had continued her story, which she prosecuted, though very briefly, from the time she left the territories of Burgundy, in company with her aunt, until the storming of Schonwaldt, and her final surrender to the Count of Crevecœur. All remained mute after she had finished her brief and broken narrative, and the Duke of Burgundy bent his fierce dark eyes on the ground, like one who seeks for a pretext to indulge his passion, but finds none sufficiently plausible to justify himself in his own eyes. «The mole,» he said at length, looking upwards, «winds not his dark subterranean path beneath our feet the less certainly, that we, though conscious of his motions, cannot absolutely trace them. Yet I would know of King

Louis, wherefore he maintained these ladies at his court, had they not gone thither by his own invitation.»

«I did not so entertain them, fair cousin,» answered the King. «Out of compassion, indeed, I received them in privacy, but took an early opportunity of placing them under the protection of the late excellent bishop, your own ally, and who was (may God assoil him!) a better judge than I, or any secular prince, how to reconcile the protection due to fugitives, with the duty which a king owes to his ally from whose dominion sthey have fled. I boldly ask this young lady, whether my reception of them was cordial, or whether it was not, on the contrary, such as made them express regret that they had made my court their place of refuge?»

«So much was it otherwise than cordial,» answered the countess, «that it induced me, at least, to doubt how far it was possible that your Majesty should have actually given the invitation of which we had been assured, by those who called themselves your agents; since, supposing them to have proceeded only as they were duly authorized, it would have been hard to reconcile your Majesty's conduct with that to be expected from a king, a knight, and a gentleman.»

The countess turned her eyes to the King as she spoke, with a look which was probably in-

tended as a reproach, but the breast of Louis was armed against all such artillery. On the contrary, waving slowly his expanded hands, and looking around the circle, he seemed to make a triumphant appeal to all present, upon the testimony borne to his innocence in the countess's reply.

Burgundy, meanwhile, cast on him a look which seemed to say, that if in some degree silenced, he was as far as ever from being satisfied, and then said abruptly to the countess,—«Methinks, fair mistress, in this account of your wanderings, you have forgot all mention of certain love-passages—So, ho! blushing already?—Certain knights of the forest, by whom your quiet was for a time interrupted. Well—that incident hath come to our ear, and something we may presently form out of it.—Tell me, King Louis, were it not well, before this vagrant Helen of Troy, or of Croye, sets more kings by the ears, were it not well to carve out a fitting match for her?»

King Louis, though conscious what ungrateful proposal was like to be made next, gave a calm and silent assent to what Charles said; but the countess herself was restored to courage by the very extremity of her situation. She quitted the arm of the Countess of Crevecœur, on which she had hitherto leaned, came forward timidly, yet with an air of dignity, and, kneeling before the Duke's throne, thus addressed him;

—« Noble Duke of Burgundy, and my liege lord; I acknowledge my fault in having withdrawn myself from your dominions without your gracious permission, and will most humbly acquiesce in any penalty you are pleased to impose. I place my lands and castles at your rightful disposal, and pray you only of your own bounty, and for the sake of my father's memory, to allow the last of the line of Croye such a moderate maintenance as may find her admission into a convent for the remainder of her life.»

« What think you, Sire, of the young person's petition to us?» said the Duke, addressing Louis.

« As of a holy and humble motion,» said the King, « which doubtless comes from that grace which ought not to be resisted or withstood.»

« The humble and lowly shall be exalted,» said Charles. « Arise, Countess Isabelle—we mean better for you than you have devised for yourself. We mean neither to sequestrate your estates, nor to abase your honours, but, on the contrary, will add largely to both.»

« Alas! my lord,» said the countess, continuing on her knees, « it is even that well-meant goodness which I fear still more than your grace's displeasure, since it compels me——»

« Saint George of Burgundy!» said Duke Charles, « Is our will to be thwarted, and our

commands disputed, at every turn? Up, I say, minion, and withdraw for the present—when we have time to think of thee, we will so order matters, that, *Teste-Saint-Gris!* you shall either obey us, or do worse.»

Notwithstanding this stern answer, the Countess Isabelle remained at his feet, and would probably, by her pertinacity, have driven him to say something yet more severe, had not the Countess of Crevecœur, who better knew that prince's humour, interfered to raise her young friend, and to conduct her from the hall.

Quentin Durward was now summoned to appear, and presented himself before the King and Duke with that freedom, distant alike from bashful reserve and intrusive boldness, which becomes a youth at once well-born and well-nurtured, who gives honour where it is due, but without permitting himself to be dazzled or confused by the presence of those to whom it is to be rendered. His uncle had furnished him with the means of again equipping himself in the arms and dress of an archer of the Scottish Guard, and his complexion, mien, and air, singularly fitted his splendid appearance. His great youth, too, prepossessed the counsellors in his favour, the rather that no one could easily believe that the sagacious Louis would have chosen so very young a person to become the confidant of political intrigues; and thus the King

enjoyed, in this as in other cases, considerable advantage from his singular choice of agents, in the class of age as well as of rank, where such election seemed least likely to be made. At the command of the Duke, sanctioned by that of Louis, Quentin commenced an account of his journey with the ladies of Croye to the neighbourhood of Liege, premising a statement of King Louis's instructions, which were, that he should escort them safely to the castle of the bishop.

« And you obeyed my orders accordingly,» said the King.

« I did, Sire,» replied the Scot.

« You omit a circumstance,» said the Duke. « You were set upon in the forest by two wandering knights.»

« It does not become me to remember or to proclaim such an incident,» said the youth, blushing ingenuously.

« But it doth not become *me* to forget it,» said the Duke of Orleans. « This youth discharged his commission manfully, and maintained his trust in a manner that I shall long remember.—Come to my apartment, archer, when this matter is over, and thou shalt find I have not forgot thy brave bearing, while I am glad to see it is equalled by thy modesty.»

« And come to mine,» said Dunois. « I have a helmet for thee, since I think I owe thee one.»

Quentin bowed low, and the examination was

resumed. At the command of Duke Charles, he produced the written instructions which he had received for the direction of his journey.

« Did you follow these instructions literally, soldier?» said the Duke.

« No, if it please your grace,» replied Quentin. «They directed me, as you may be pleased to observe, to cross the Maes, near Namur; whereas I kept the left bank, as being both the nigher and the safer road to Liege.»

« And wherefore that alteration?» said the Duke.

« Because I began to suspect the fidelity of my guide,» answered Quentin.

« Now mark the questions I have next to ask thee,» said the Duke. « Reply truly to them, and fear nothing from the resentment of any one. But if you palter or double in your answers, I will have thee hung alive in an iron-chain from the steeple of the market-house, where thou shalt wish for death for many an hour ere he come to relieve you!»

There was a deep silence ensued. At length, having given the youth time, as he thought, to consider the circumstances in which he was placed, the Duke demanded to know of Durward, who his guide was, by whom supplied, and wherefore he had been led to entertain suspicion of him? To the first of these questions, Quentin Durward answered, by naming Hayraddin Maugrabin, the Bohemian; to the se-

cond, that the guide had been recommended by Tristan l'Hermite; and in reply to the third point, he mentioned what had happened in the Franciscan convent, near Namur; how the Bohemian had been expelled from the holy house; and how, jealous of his behaviour, he had dogged him to a rendezvous with one of William de la Marck's Lanzknechts, where he overheard them arrange a plan for surprising the ladies who were under his protection.

«Now hark thee,» said the Duke, «and once more remember thy life depends on thy veracity: did these villains mention their having this King's—I mean this very King Louis of France's authority, for their scheme of surprising the escort, and carrying away the ladies?»

«If such infamous fellows had said so,» replied Quentin, «I know not how I should have believed them, having the words of the King himself to place in opposition to theirs.»

Louis, who had listened hitherto with most earnest attention, could not help drawing his breath deeply, when he heard Durward's answer, in the manner of one from whose bosom a heavy weight has been at once removed. The Duke again looked disconcerted and moody; and returning to the charge, questioned Quentin still more closely, whether he did not understand from these men's private conversa-

tion that the plots which they meditated had King Louis's sanction?

«I repeat, that I heard nothing which could authorize me to say so,» answered the young man, who, though internally convinced of the King's accession to the treachery of Hayraddin, yet held it contrary to his allegiance to bring forward his own suspicions on the subject; «and if I *had* heard such men make such an assertion, I again say, that I would not have given their testimony weight against the instructions of the King himself.»

«Thou art a faithful messenger,» said the Duke with a sneer; «and I venture to say, that, in obeying the King's instructions, thou hast disappointed his expectations in a manner that thou mightst have smarted for; but that subsequent events have made thy bull-headed fidelity seem like good service.»

«I understand you not, my lord,» said Quentin Durward; «all I know is, that my master King Louis sent me to protect these ladies, and that I did so accordingly, both in the journey to Schonwaldt, and through the subsequent scenes which took place. I understood the instructions of the King to be honourable, and I executed them honourably; had they been of a different tenor, they would not have suited one of my name or nation.»

«*Fier comme un Ècossais*,» said Charles, who, however disappointed at the tenor of Dur-

ward's reply, was not unjust enough to blame him for his boldness. « But, hark thee, archer, what instructions were those which made thee, as some sad fugitives from Schonwaldt have informed us, parade the streets of Liege, at the head of those mutineers who afterwards cruelly murdered their temporal prince and spiritual father? And what harangue was it which thou didst make after that murder was committed, in which you took upon you, as an agent for Louis, to assume authority among the villains who had just perpetrated so great a crime?»

« My lord» said Quentin, « there are enough to testify, that I assumed not the character of an envoy of France in the town of Liege, but had it fixed upon me by the obstinate clamours of the people themselves, who refused to give credit to any disclamation which I could make. This I told to the domestics of the bishop when I had made my escape from the city, and recommended their attention to the security of the castle, which might have prevented the calamity and horror of the succeeding night. It is, no doubt, true, that I did, in the extremity of danger, avail myself of the influence which my imputed character gave me, to save the Countess Isabelle, to protect my own life, and, so far as I could, to rein in the humour for slaughter, which had already broke out in so dreadful an instance. I repeat, and will

maintain it with my body, that I had no commission from the King of France; and that finally, when I did avail myself of that imputed character, it was as if I had snatched up a shield to protect myself in a moment of emergency, and used it, as I should surely have done, for defence of myself and others, without enquiring whether I had right to the heraldic emblazonments which it displayed.»

«And therein, my young companion and prisoner,» said Crevecœur, unable any longer to remain silent, «acted with equal spirit and good sense; and his doing so cannot justly be imputed as blame to King Louis.»

There was a murmur of assent among the surrounding nobility, which sounded joyfully in the ears of King Louis, whilst it gave no little offence to those of Charles. He rolled his eyes angrily around; and the sentiments, so generally expressed by so many of his highest vassals and wisest counsellors, would not perhaps have prevented his giving way to his violent and despotic temper, had not d'Argenton, who foresaw the danger, prevented it, by suddenly announcing a herald from the city of Liege.

«A herald from weavers and nailers!» exclaimed the Duke—«admit him instantly. By Our Lady, I will learn from this same herald something further of his employers' hopes and projects, than this young French-Scottish man-at arms seems desirous to tell me.»

CHAPTER X.

THE HERALD.

Ariel. —— Hark! they roar.
Prospero. Let them be hunted soundly.

The Tempest.

THERE was room made in the assembly, and no small curiosity evinced by those present to see the herald whom the insurgent Liegeois had ventured to send to so haughty a prince as the Duke of Burgundy, while in such high indignation against them. For it must be remembered, that at this period heralds were only dispatched from sovereign princes to each other upon solemn occasions; and that the inferior nobility employed pursuivants, a lower rank of officers-at-arms. It may be also noticed in passing, that Louis XI., an habitual derider of whatever did not promise real power or substantial advantage, was in especial a professed contemner of heralds and heraldry, «red, blue, and green, with all their trumpery,»

to which the pride of his rival Charles, which was of a very different kind, attached no small degree of ceremonious importance.

The herald, who was now introduced into the presence of the monarchs, was dressed in a tabard or coat, embroidered with the arms of his master, in which the boar's head made a distinguished appearance, in blazonry, which, in the opinion of the skilful, was more showy than accurate. The rest of his dress—a dress always sufficiently tawdry—was overcharged with lace, embroidery, and ornament of every kind; and the plume of feathers which he wore was so high, as if intended to sweep the roof of the hall. In short, the usual gaudy splendour of the heraldic attire was caricatured and overdone. The boar's head was not only repeated on every part of his dress, but even his bonnet was formed into that shape, and it was represented with bloody tusks, or, in proper language, *langed and dentated gules*; and there was something in the man's appearance which seemed to imply a mixture of boldness and apprehension, like one who has undertaken a dangerous commission, and is sensible that audacity alone can carry him through it with safety. Something of the same mixture of fear and effrontery was visible in the manner in which he paid his respects, and he showed also a grotesque awkwardness not

usual amongst those who were accustomed to be received in the presence of princes.

« Who art thou, in the devil's name?» was the greeting with which Charles the Bold received this singular envoy.

«I am Rouge Sanglier,» answered the herald, «the officer-at-arms of William de la Marck, by the grace of God, and the election of the Chapter, Prince Bishop of Liege.»

« Ha!» exclaimed Charles, but, as if subduing his own passion, he made a sign to him to proceed.

« And, in right of his wife, the Honourable Countess Hameline of Croye, Count of Croye, and Lord of Bracquemont.»

The utter astonishment of Duke Charles at the extremity of boldness with which these titles were announced in his presence, seemed to strike him dumb; and the herald conceiving, doubtless, that he had made a suitable impression by the annunciation of his character, proceeded to state his errand.

« *Annuncio vobis gaudium magnum*,» he said; «I let you, Charles of Burgundy and Earl of Flanders, to know, in my master's name, that under favour of a dispensation of our Holy Father of Rome, presently expected, and appointing a fitting substitute *ad sacra*, he proposes to exercise at once the office of Prince Bishop, and maintain the rights of Count of Croye.»

The Duke of Burgundy, at this and other

pauses in the herald's speech, only ejaculated «Ha!» or some similar interjection, without making any answer; and the tone of exclamation was that of one who, though surprised and moved, is willing to hear all that is to be said ere he commits himself by making an answer. To the further astonishment of all who were present, he forbore from his usual abrupt and violent gesticulations, remaining with the nail of his thumb pressed against his teeth, which was his favourite attitude when giving attention, and keeping his eyes bent on the ground, as if unwilling to betray the passion which might gleam in them.

The envoy, therefore, proceeded boldly and unabashed in the delivery of his message. «In the name, therefore, of the Prince Bishop of Liege, and Count of Croye, I am to require of you, Duke Charles, to desist from those pretensions and encroachments which you have made on the free and imperial city of Liege, by connivance with the late Louis of Bourbon, unworthy Bishop thereof.» —

«Ha!» again exclaimed the Duke.

«Also to restore the banners of the community, which you took violently from the town, to the number of six-and-thirty; — to rebuild the breaches in their walls, and restore the fortifications which you tyrannically dismantled, — and to acknowledge my master, William de la Marck, as Prince Bishop, lawfully

erected in a free Chapter of Canons, of which behold the proces-verbal.»

«Have you finished?» said the Duke.

«Not yet,» replied the envoy: «I am further to require your grace, on the part of the said right noble and venerable prince, bishop, and count, that you do presently withdraw the garrison from the Castle of Bracquemont, and other places of strength, belonging to the Earldom of Croye, which have been placed there, whether in your own most gracious name, or in that of Isabelle, or any other; until it shall be decided by the Imperial Diet, whether the fiefs in question shall not pertain to the sister of the late count, my most gracious Lady Hameline, rather than to his daughter, in respect of the *jus emphyteusis*.»—

«Your master is most learned,» replied the Duke.

«Yet,» continued the herald, «the noble and venerable prince and count will be disposed, all other disputes betwixt Burgundy and Liege being settled, to fix upon the Lady Isabelle such an appanage as may become her quality.»

«He is generous and considerate,» said the Duke, in the same tone.

«Now, by a poor fool's conscience,» said Le Glorieux apart, to the Count of Crevecœur, «I would rather be in the worst cow's hide that ever died of the murrain, than in that fellow's painted coat! The poor man goes on like

drunkards, who only look to the other pot, and not to the score which mine host chalks up behind the lattice.»

« Have you yet done?» said the Duke to the herald.

« One word more,» answered Rouge Sanglier, « from my noble and venerable lord aforesaid, respecting his worthy and trusty ally, the Most Christian King——»

« Ha!» exclaimed the Duke, starting, and in a fiercer tone than he had yet used; but checking himself, he instantly composed himself again to attention.

« Which most Christian King's royal person it is rumoured that you, Charles of Burgundy, have placed under restraint, contrary to your duty as a vassal of the Crown of France, and to the faith observed among Christian Sovereigns. For which reason, my said noble and venerable master, by my mouth, charges you to put his royal and Most Christian ally forthwith at freedom, or to receive the defiance which I am authorized to pronounce to you.»

« Have you yet done?» said the Duke.

« I have,» answered the herald, « and await your grace's answer, trusting it may be such as will save the effusion of Christian blood.»

« Now, by Saint George of Burgundy—» said the Duke;—but, ere he could proceed further, Louis arose, and struck in with a tone of so

much dignity and authority, that Charles could not interrupt him.

«Under your favour, fair cousin of Burgundy,» said the King; «we ourselves crave priority of voice in replying to this insolent fellow.—Sirrah herald, or whatever thou art, carry back notice to the perjured outlaw and murderer, William de la Marck, that the King of France will be presently before Liege, for the purpose of punishing the sacrilegious murderer of his late beloved kinsman, Louis of Bourbon; and that he proposes to gibbet De la Marck alive, for the insolence of terming himself his ally, and putting his royal name into the mouth of one of his own base messengers.»

«Add whatever else on my part,» said Charles, «which it may not misbecome a prince to send to a common thief and murderer.—And begone!—Yet stay.—Never herald went from the Court of Burgundy without having cause to cry, Largesse!—Let him be scourged till the bones are laid bare!»

«Nay, but if it please your Grace,» said Crevecœur and d'Hymbercourt together, «he is a herald and so far privileged.»

«It is you, Messires,» replied the Duke, «who are such owls, as to think that the tabard makes the herald. I see by that fellow's blazoning he is a mere impostor. Let Toison d'Or step forward, and question him in your presence.»

In spite of his natural effrontery, the envoy of the Wild Boar of Ardennes now became pale; and that notwithstanding some touches of paint with which he had adorned his countenance. Toison d'Or, the chief herald, as we have elsewhere said, of the Duke, and king-at-arms within his dominions, stepped forward with the solemnity of one who knew what was due to his office, and asked his supposed brother, in what college he had studied the science which he professed.

«I was bred a pursuivant at the Heraldic College of Ratisbon,» answered Rouge Sanglier, «and received the diploma of Ehrenhold from that same learned fraternity.»

«You could not derive it from a source more worthy,» answered Toison d'Or, bowing still lower than he had done before; «and if I presume to confer with you on the mysteries of our sublime science, in obedience to the orders of the most gracious Duke, it is not in hopes of giving, but of receiving knowledge.»

«Go to,» said the Duke, impatiently. «Leave off ceremony, and ask him some question that may try his skill.»

«It were injustice to ask a disciple of the worthy College of Arms at Ratisbon, if he comprehendeth the common terms of blazonry,» said Toison d'Or; «but I may, without offence, crave of Rouge Sanglier to say if he is instructed in the more mysterious and secret terms of

the science, by which the more learned do emblematically, and as it were parabolically, express to each other what is conveyed to others in the ordinary language, taught in the very accidence as it were of heraldry?»

« I understand one sort of blazonry as well as another,» answered Rouge Sanglier, boldly; « but it may be we have not the same terms in Germany which you have here in Flanders.»

« Alas, that you will say so!» replied Toison d'Or; « our noble science, which is indeed the very banner of nobleness, and glory of generosity, being the same in all Christian countries, nay, known and acknowledged even by the Saracens and Moors. I would, therefore, pray of you to describe what coat you will after the celestial fashion, that is, by the planets.»

« Blazon it yourself as you will,» said Rouge Sanglier; « I will do no such apish tricks upon commandment, as an ape is made to come aloft.»

« Show him a coat, and let him blazon it his own way,» said the Duke; « and if he fails, I promise him that his back shall be gules, azure, and sable.»

« Here,» said the herald of Burgundy, taking from his pouch a piece of parchment, « is a scroll, in which certain considerations led me to prick down, after my own poor fashion, an ancient coat. I will pray my brother, if indeed

he belong to the honourable College of Arms at Ratisbon, to decypher it in fitting language.»

Le Glorieux, who seemed to take great pleasure in this discussion, had by this time bustled himself close up to the two heralds. « I will help thee, good fellow,» said he to Rouge Sanglier, as he looked hopelessly upon the scroll. « This, my lords and masters, represents the cat looking out at the dairy-window.»

This sally occasioned a laugh, which was something to the advantage of Rouge Sanglier, as it led Toison d'Or, indignant at the misconstruction of his drawing, to explain it as the coat-of-arms assumed by Childebert, King of France, after he had taken prisoner Gandemar, King of Burgundy; representing an ounce, or tiger-cat, the emblem of the captive prince, behind a grating, or, as Toison d'Or technically defined it, « Sable, a musion passant Or, oppressed with a trellis gules, cloué of the second.»

« By my bauble,» said Le Glorieux, « if the cat resemble Burgundy, she has the right side of the grating now-a-days.»

« True, good fellow,» said Louis, laughing, while the rest of the presence, and even Charles himself, seemed disconcerted at so broad a jest, —« I owe thee a piece of gold for turning something that looked like sad earnest, into the merry game which I trust it will end in.»

«Silence, Le Glorieux,« said the Duke; «and you, Toison d'Or, who are too learned to be intelligible, stand back, and bring that rascal forward some of you.—Hark ye, villain,» he said, in his harshest tone, «do you know the difference between argent and or?»

«For pity's sake, your grace, be good unto me!—Noble King Louis, speak for me!»

«Speak for thyself,» said the Duke—«In a word, art thou herald or not?»

«Only for this occasion,» said the detected official.

«Now, by Saint George!» said the Duke, eyeing Louis askance, «we know no king—no gentleman—save *one*, who would have so prostituted the noble science on which royalty and gentry rest! save that king, who sent to Edward of England a serving-man disguised as a herald.»

«Such a stratagem,» said Louis, «could only be justified at a court where no heralds were at the time, and when the emergency was urgent. But though it might have passed on the blunt and thick-witted islander, no one with brains a whit better than those of a wild boar would have thought of passing such a trick upon the accomplished court of Burgundy.»

«Send him who will,» said the Duke, fiercely, «he shall return on their hands in poor case. —Here!—drag him to the market-place!—slash him with bridle-reins and dog-whips until

the tabard hang about him in tatters!—Upon the Rouge Sanglier!—ça, ça!—Haloo, haloo!»

Four or five large hounds, such as are painted in the hunting-pieces upon which Rubens and Schneiders laboured in conjunction, caught the well-known notes with which the Duke concluded, and began to yell and bay as if the boar were just roused from his lair.

«By the rood!» said King Louis, observant to catch the vein of his dangerous cousin, «since the ass has put on the boar's hide, I would set the dogs on him to bait him out of it!»

«Right! right!» exclaimed Duke Charles, the fancy exactly chiming in with his humour at the moment—«it shall be done!—Uncouple the hounds!—Hyke a Talbot! hyke a Beaumont!—We will course him from the door of the castle to the east gate.»

«I trust your grace will treat me as a beast of chace,» said the fellow, putting the best face he could upon the matter, «and allow me fair law?»

«Thou art but vermin,» said the Duke, «and entitled to no law, by the letter of the book of hunting; nevertheless, thou shalt have sixty yards in advance, were it but for the sake of thy unparalleled impudence.—Away, away, sirs!—we will see this sport.»—And the council breaking up tumultuously, all hurried, none faster than the two princes, to enjoy the hu-

mane pastime which King Louis had suggested.

The Rouge Sanglier showed excellent sport; for, winged with terror, and having half a score of fierce boar-hounds hard at his haunches, encouraged by the blowing of horns and the woodland cheer of the hunters, he flew like the very wind, and, had he not been encumbered with his herald's coat (the worst possible habit for a runner), he might fairly have escaped dog-free; he also doubled once or twice, in a manner much approved of by the spectators. None of these, nay, not even Charles himself, was so delighted with the sport as King Louis, who, partly from political considerations, and partly as being naturally pleased with the sight of human suffering when ludicrously exhibited, laughed till the tears ran from his eyes, and, in his ecstasies of rapture, caught hold of the Duke's ermine cloak, as if to support himself; whilst the Duke, no less delighted, flung his arm around the King's shoulder, making thus an exhibition of confidential sympathy and familiarity, very much at variance with the terms on which they had so lately stood together.

At length the speed of the pseudo-herald could save him no longer from the fangs of his pursuers; they seized him, pulled him down, and would probably soon have throttled him, had not the Duke called out—«Stave and tail! —stave and tail!—Take them off him!—He hath shown so good a course, that, though he

has made no sport at bay, we will not have him dispatched.»

Several officers accordingly busied themselves in taking off the dogs; and they were soon seen coupling some up, and pursuing others which ran through the streets, shaking in sport and triumph the tattered fragments of painted cloth and embroidery rent from the tabard, which the unfortunate wearer had put on in an unlucky hour.

At this moment, and while the Duke was too much engaged with what passed before him to mind what was said behind him, Oliver le Dain, gliding behind King Louis, whispered into his ear—« It is the Bohemian, Hayraddin Maugrabin—It were not well he should come to speech of the Duke.»

« He must die,» answered Louis, in the same tone—« dead men tell no tales.»

One instant afterwards, Tristan l'Hermite, to whom Oliver had given the hint, stepped forward before the King and the Duke, and said, in his blunt manner, « so please your Majesty and your grace, this piece of game is mine, and I claim him—he is marked with my stamp—the fleur-de-lis is branded on his shoulder, as all men may see.— He is a known villain, and hath slain the King's subjects, robbed churches, deflowered virgins, slain deer in the royal parks——»

« Enough, enough,» said Duke Charles,

«he is my royal cousin's property by many a good title. What will your Majesty do with him?»

«If he is left to my disposal,» said the King, «I will only give him one lesson in the science of heraldry, in which he is so ignorant—only explain to him, practically, the meaning of a cross *potence*, with a noose dangling proper.»

«Not as to be by him borne, but as to bear him.—Let him take the degrees under your gossip Tristan—he is a deep professor in such mysteries.»

Thus answered the Duke, with a burst of discordant laughter at his own wit, which was so cordially chorused by Louis, that his rival could not help looking kindly at him while he said—

«Ah, Louis, Louis! would to God thou wert as faithful a monarch as thou art a merry companion! I cannot but think often on the jovial time we used to spend together.»

«You may bring it back when you will,» said Louis; «I will grant you as fair terms as for very shame's sake you ought to ask in my present condition, without making yourself the fable of Christendom; and I will swear to observe them upon the holy relique which I have ever the grace to bear about my person, being a fragment of the true cross.»

Here he took a small golden reliquary, which was suspended from his neck next to his

shirt by a chain of the same metal, and, having kissed it devoutly, continued—

«Never was false oath sworn on this most sacred relique, but it was avenged within the year.»

«Yet,» said the Duke, «it was the same on which you swore amity to me when you left Burgundy, and shortly after sent the Bastard of Rubempré to murder or kidnap me.»

«Nay, gracious cousin, now you are ripping up ancient grievances,» said the King; «I promise you, that you were deceived in that matter.—Moreover, it was not upon *this* relique which I then swore, but upon another fragment of the true cross which I got from the Grand Seignor, weakened in virtue, doubtless, by sojourning with infidels. Besides, did not the war of the Public Good break out within the year; and was not a Burgundian army encamped at Saint Denis, backed by all the great feudatories of France; and was I not obliged to yield up Normandy to my brother?—O God, shield us from perjury on such a warrant as this!»

«Well, cousin,» answered the Duke, «I do believe thou hadst a lesson to keep faith another time.—And now for once, without finesse and doubling, will you make good your promise, and go with me to punish this murdering La Marck and the Liegeois?»

«I will march against them,» said Louis,

« with the ban, and arriere-ban of France, and the Oriflamme displayed.»

« Nay, nay,» said the Duke, « that is more than is needful, or may be advisable. The presence of your Scottish Guard, and two hundred choice lances, will serve to show that you are a free agent. A large army might——»

« Make me so in effect, you would say, my fair cousin?» said the King. « Well, you shall dictate the numbers of my attendants.»

« And to put this fair cause of mischief out of the way, you will agree to the Countess Isabelle of Croye wedding with the Duke of Orleans?»

« Fair cousin,» said the King, « you drive my courtesy to extremity. The Duke is the betrothed bridegroom of my daughter Joan. Be generous—yield up this matter, and let us speak rather of the towns on the Somme.»

« My council will talk to your Majesty of these,» said Charles; « I myself have less at heart the acquisition of territory, than the redress of injuries. You have tampered with my vassals, and your royal pleasure must needs dispose of the hand of a ward of Burgundy. Your Majesty must bestow it within the pale of your own royal family, since you have meddled with it—otherwise, our conference breaks off.»

« Were I to say I did this willingly,» said the King, « no one would believe me; therefore do

you, my fair cousin, judge of the extent of my wish to oblige you, when I say, most reluctantly, that the parties consenting, and a dispensation from the Pope being attained, my own wishes shall be no bar to this match which you propose.»

«All besides can be easily settled by our ministers,» said the Duke, «and we are once more cousins and friends.»

«May Heaven be praised!» said Louis, «who, holding in his hand the hearts of princes, doth mercifully incline them to peace and clemency, and prevent the effusion of human blood.—Oliver,» he added apart to that favourite, who ever waited around him like the familiar beside a sorcerer, «hark thee—tell Tristan to be speedy in dealing with yonder runagate Bohemian.»

CHAPTER XI.

THE EXECUTION.

I 'll take thee to the good green wood,
And make thine own hand chuse the tree.

Old Ballad.

«Now God be praised, that gave us the power of laughing, and making others laugh, and shame to the dull cur who scorns the office of a jester! Here is a joke, and that none of the brightest (though it may pass, since it has amused two princes), which hath gone farther than a thousand reasons of state to prevent a war between France and Burgundy.»

Such was the inference of Le Glorieux, when, in consequence of the reconciliation, of which we gave the particulars in the last Chapter, the Burgundian guards were withdrawn from the Castle of Peronne, the abode of the King removed from the ominous tower of Count Herbert, and, to the great joy both of French and Burgundians, an outward show at least of confidence and friendship seemed so

established between Duke Charles and his liege Lord. Yet still the latter, though treated with ceremonial observance, was sufficiently aware that he continued to be the object of suspicion, though he prudently affected to overlook it, and seemed to consider himself as entirely at his ease.

Meanwhile, as frequently happens in such cases, whilst the principal parties concerned had so far made up their differences, one of the subaltern agents concerned in their intrigues was bitterly experiencing the truth of the political maxim, that if the great have frequent need of base tools, they make amends to society by abandoning them to their fate, so soon as they find them no longer useful.

This was Hayraddin Maugrabin, who, surrendered by the Duke's officers to the King's provost-marshal, was by him placed in the hands of his two trusty aides-de-camp, Trois-Eschelles and Petit-André, to be dispatched without loss of time. One on either side of him, and followed by a few guards and a multitude of rabble,—this playing the Allegro, that the Pensieroso, he was marched off (to use a modern comparison, like Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy) to the neighbouring forest; where, to save all further trouble and ceremonial of a gibbet, and so forth, the disposers of his fate proposed to knit him up to the first sufficient tree.

They were not long in finding an oak, as Petit-André facetiously expressed it, fit to bear such an acorn; and placing the wretched criminal on a bank, under a sufficient guard, they began their extemporaneous preparations for the final catastrophe. At that moment, Hayraddin, gazing on the crowd, encountered the eyes of Quentin Durward, who, thinking he recognized the countenance of his faithless guide in that of the detected impostor, had followed with the crowd to witness the execution, and assure himself of the identity.

When the executioners informed him that all was ready, Hayraddin, with much calmness, asked a single boon at their hands.

«Any thing, my son, consistent with our office,» said Trois-Echelles.

«That is,» said Hayraddin, « any thing but my life.»

«Even so,» said Trois-Echelles, «and something more; for as you seem resolved to do credit to our mystery, and die like a man, without making wry mouths—why, though our orders are to be prompt, I care not if I indulge you ten minutes longer.»

«You are even too generous,» said Hayraddin.

«Truly we may be blamed for it,» said Petit-André; «but what of that?—I could consent almost to give my life for such a jerry-come-tumble, such a smart, tight, firm lad, who

proposes to come from aloft with a grace, as an honest fellow should do.»

«So that if you want a confessor,» said Trois-Eschelles——

«Or a *lire* of wine,» said his facetious companion——

«Or a psalm,» said Tragedy——

«Or a song,» said Comedy——

«Neither, my good, kind, and most expeditious friends,» said the Bohemian—«I only pray to speak a few minutes with yonder archer of the Scottish Guard.»

The executioners hesitated a moment; but Trois-Eschelles recollecting that Quentin Durward was believed, from various circumstances, to stand high in the favour of their master King Louis, they resolved to permit the interview.

When Quentin, at their summons, approached the condemned criminal, he could not but be shocked at his appearence, however justly his doom might have been deserved. The remnants of his heraldic finery, rent to tatters by the fangs of the dogs, and the clutches of the bipeds, who had rescued him from their fury to lead him to the gallows, gave him at once a ludicrous and a wretched appearance. His face was discoloured with paint, and with some remnants of a fictitious beard, assumed for the purpose of disguise, and there was the paleness of death upon his cheek and upon his

lip; yet, strong in passive courage, like most of his tribe, his eye, while it glistened and wandered, as well as the contorted smile of his mouth, seemed to bid defiance to the death he was about to die.

Quentin was struck partly with horror, partly with compassion, as he approached the miserable man; and these feelings probably betrayed themselves in his manner, for Petit-André called out, «Trip it more smartly, jolly archer—This gentleman's leisure cannot wait for you, if you walk as an the pebbles were eggs, and you afraid of breaking them.»

«I must speak with him in privacy,» said the criminal, despair seeming to croak in his accent as he uttered the words.

«That may hardly consist with our office, my merry leap-the-ladder,» said Petit-André; «we know you for a slippery eel of old.»

«I am tied with your horse-girths, hand and foot,» said the criminal—«You may keep guard around me, though out of ear-shot—the archer is your own King's servant—And if I give you ten guilders——»

«Laid out in masses, the sum may profit his poor soul,» said Trois-Eschelles.

«Laid out in wine or brantwein, it will comfort my poor body,» responded Petit-André. «So let them be forthcoming, my little crack-rope.»

«Pay the blood-hounds their fee,» said Hay-

raddin to Durward; «I was plundered of every stiver when they took me—it shall avail thee much.»

Quentin paid the executioners their guerdon. and, like men of promise, they retreated out of hearing—keeping, however, a careful eye on the criminal's motions. After waiting an instant till the unhappy man should speak, as he still remained silent, Quentin at length addressed him, «And to this conclusion thou hast at length arrived?»

«Ay,» answered Hayraddin, «it required neither astrologer, nor physiognomist, nor chiromantist, to foretel that I should follow the destiny of my family.»

«Brought to this early end by thy long course of crime and treachery?» said the Scot.

«No; by the bright Aldeboran and all his brother twinklers!» answered the Bohemian. «I am brought hither by my folly, in believing that the blood-thristy cruelty of a Frank could be restrained even by what they themselves profess to hold most sacred. A priest's vestment would have been no safer garb for me than a herald's tabard, however sanctimonious are your professions of devotion and chivalry.»

«A detected impostor has no right to claim the immunities of the disguise he has usurped,» said Durward.

«Detected!» said the Bohemian. «My jargon was as good as yonder old fool of a

herald's;—but let it pass.—As well now as hereafter.»

« You abuse time,» said Quentin. «If you have aught to tell me, say it quickly, and then take some care of your soul.»

«Of my soul!» said the Bohemian, with a hideous laugh. «Think ye a leprosy of twenty years can be cured in an instant?—If I have a soul, it hath been in such a course since I was ten years old and more, that it would take me one month to recall all my crimes, and another to tell them to the priest;—and were such space granted me, it is five to one I would employ it otherwise.»

« Hardened wretch, blaspheme not! Tell me what thou hast to say, and I leave thee to thy fate,» said Durward, with mingled pity and horror.

« I have a boon to ask,—but first I will buy it of you; for your tribe, with all their professions of charity, give nought for nought.»

« I could well nigh say thy gifts perish with thee, but that thou art on the very verge of eternity. Ask thy boon—reserve thy bounty—it can do me no good—I remember enough of your good offices of old.»

«Why, I loved you,» said Hayraddin, « for the matter that chanced on the banks of the Cher; and I would have helped you to a wealthy dame. You wore her scarf, which partly misled me; and indeed I thought that

Hameline, with her portable wealth, was more for your market-penny than the other hen-sparrow, with her old roost at Bracquemont, which Charles has clutched, and is like to keep his claws upon.»

« Talk not so idly, unhappy man,» said Quentin; « yonder men become impatient.»

« Give them ten guilders for ten minutes more,» said the culprit,—who, like most in his situation, mixed with his hardihood a desire of procrastinating his fate,—« I tell thee it shall avail thee much.»

« Use then well the minutes so purchased,» said Durward, and easily made a new bargain with the marshal's-men.

This done, Hayraddin continued.—« Yes, I assure you I meant you well; and Hameline would have proved an easy and convenient spouse. Why, she hath reconciled herself even with the Boar of Ardennes, though his mode of wooing was somewhat of the roughest, and queens it yonder in his stithe, as if she had fed on mast-husks and acorns all her life.»

« Cease this brutal and untimely jesting,» said Quentin, « or, once more I tell you, I will leave you to your fate.»

« You are right,» said Hayraddin, after a moment's pause; « what cannot be postponed must be faced!—Well, know then, I came hither in this accursed disguise, moved by a great reward from De la Marck, and hoping a yet

mightier one from King Louis, not merely to bear the message of defiance which you may have heard of, but to tell the King an important secret.»

«It was a fearful risk,» said Durward.

«It was paid for as such, and such it hath proved,» answered the Bohemian. «De la Marck attempted before to communicate with Louis by means of Marthon; but she could not, it seems, approach nearer to him than the astrologer, to whom she told all the passages of the journey, and of Schonwaldt; but it is a chance if her tidings ever reach Louis, except in the shape of a prophecy. But hear my secret, which is more important than aught she could tell. William de la Marck has assembled a numerous and strong force within the city of Liege, and augments it daily by means of the old priest's treasures. But he proposes not to hazard a battle with the chivalry of Burgundy, and still less to stand a siege in the dismantled town. This he will do—he will suffer the hot-brained Charles to sit down before the place without opposition; and, in the night, make an out-fall or sally upon the leaguer with his whole force. Many he will have in French armour, who will cry France, Saint Louis, and Denis Montjoye, as if there were a strong body of French auxiliaries in the city. This cannot chuse but strike utter confusion among the Burgundians; and if King Louis, with his

guards, attendants, and such soldiers as he may have with him, shall second his efforts, the Boar of Ardennes nothing doubts the discomfiture of the whole Burgundian army.—There is my secret, and I bequeath it to you. Forward, or prevent the enterprize—sell the intelligence to King Louis, or to Duke Charles, I care not —save or destroy whom thou wilt; for my part, I only grieve that I cannot spring it like a mine, to the destruction of them all!»

«It is indeed an important secret,» said Quentin, instantly comprehending how easily the national jealousy might be awakened in a camp consisting partly of French, partly of Burgundians.

«Ay, so it is,» answered Hayraddin; «and, now you have it, you would fain begone, and leave me without granting the boon for which I have paid beforehand.»

«Tell me thy request,» said Quentin—«I will grant it if it is in my power.»

«Nay, it is no mighty demand—it is only in behalf of poor Klepper, my palfrey, the only living thing that may miss me.—A due mile south, you will find him feeding by a deserted collier's hut; whistle to him thus—(he whistled a peculiar note), and call him by his name, Klepper, he will come to you; here is his bridle under my gabardine—it is lucky the hounds got it not, for he obeys no other. Take him, and make much of him—I do not say for his

master's sake—but because I have placed at your disposal the event of a mighty war. He will never fail you at need—night and day, rough and smooth, fair and foul, warm stables, and the winter sky, are the same to Klepper; had I cleared the gates of Peronne, and got so far as where I left him, I had not been in this case.—Will you be kind to Klepper?»

«I swear to you that I will,» answered Quentin, affected by what seemed a trait of tenderness in a character so hardened.

«Then fare thee well!—Yet stay—stay—I would not willingly die in discourtesy, forgetting a lady's commission.—This billet is from the very gracious and extremely silly Lady of the Wild Boar of Ardennes, to her black-eyed niece—I see by your look I have chosen a willing messenger.—And one word more—I forgot to say, that in the stuffing of my saddle you will find a rich purse of gold pieces, for the sake of which I put my life on the venture which has cost me so dear. Take them, and replace a hundred-fold the guilders you have bestowed on these bloody slaves—I make you mine heir.»

«I will bestow them in good works, and masses for the benefit of thy soul,» said Quentin.

«Name not that word again,» said Hayraddin, his countenance assuming a dreadful expression; «there is—there can be—there shall be

—no such thing!—it is a dream of priest-craft!»

«Unhappy—most unhappy being! Think better!—let me speed for a priest—these men will delay yet a little longer—I will bribe them to it,» said Quentin—«What canst thou expect dying in such opinions, and impenitent?»

«To be resolved into the elements,» said the hardened atheist, pressing his fettered arms against his bosom; «my hope, trust, and expectation is, that the mysterious frame of humanity shall melt into the general mass of nature, to be recompounded in the other forms with which she daily supplies those which daily disappear,—the watery particles to streams and showers, the earthy parts to enrich their mother earth, the airy portions to wanton in the breeze, and those of fire to supply the blaze of Aldeboran and his brethren—In this faith have I lived, and I will die in it!—Hence! begone! —disturb me no further!—I have spoken the last word that mortal ears shall listen to!»

Deeply impressed with the horrors of his condition, Quentin Durward yet saw that it was vain to hope to awaken him to a sense of his fearful state. He bid him, therefore, farewell; to which the criminal only replied by a short and sullen nod, as one who, plunged in reverie, bids adieu to company which distracts his thoughts. He bent his course towards the forest, and easily found where Klepper was feed-

ing. The creature came at his call, but was for some time unwilling to be caught, snuffing and starting when the stranger approached him. At length, however, Quentin's general acquaintance with the habits of the animal, and perhaps some particular knowledge of those of Klepper, which he had often admired while Hayraddin and he travelled together, enabled him to take possession of the Bohemian's dying bequest. Long ere he returned to Peronne, the Bohemian had gone where the vanity of his dreadful creed was to be put to the final issue—a fearful experience for one who had neither expressed remorse for the past, nor apprehension for the future!

CHAPTER XII.

A PRIZE FOR HONOUR.

« 'T is brave for Beauty when the best blade wins her. »
The Count Palatine.

When Quentin Durward reached Peronne, a council was sitting, in the issue of which he was interested more deeply than he could have apprehended, and which, though held by persons of a rank with whom one of his could scarce be supposed to have community of interest, had nevertheless the most extraordinary influence on his fortunes.

King Louis, who, after the interlude of De la Marck's envoy, had omitted no opportunity to cultivate the returning interest which that circumstance had given him in the Duke's opinion, had been engaged in consulting him, or, it might be almost said, receiving his opinion, upon the number and quality of the troops, by whom, as auxiliary to the Duke of Burgundy, he was to be attended in their joint expedition against Liege. He plainly saw the wish of Charles

was to call into his camp such Frenchmen as, from their small number and high quality, might be considered rather as hostages than as auxiliaries; but, observant of Crevecœur's advice, he assented as readily to whatever the Duke proposed, as if it had arisen from the free impulse of his own mind.

The King failed not, however, to indemnify himself for his complaisance, by the indulgence of his vindictive temper against Balue, whose counsels had led him to repose such exuberant trust in the Duke of Burgundy. Tristan, who bore the summons for moving up his auxiliary forces, had the further commission to carry the cardinal to the Castle of Loches, and there shut him up in one of those iron cages, which he himself is said to have invented.

«Let him make proof of his own devices,» said the King; «he is a man of holy church—we may not shed his blood; but, *Pasques-Dieu!* his bishoprick, for ten years to come, shall have an impregnable frontier to make up for its small extent!—And see the troops are brought up instantly.»

Perhaps, by this prompt acquiescence, Louis hoped to evade the more unpleasing condition with which the Duke had clogged their reconciliation. But if he so hoped, he greatly mistook the temper of his cousin; for never man lived more tenacious of his purpose than Charles of Burgundy, and least of all was he willing to

relax any stipulation which he had made in resentment, or revenge, of a supposed injury.

No sooner were the necessary expresses dispatched to summon up the forces who were selected to act as auxiliaries, than Louis was called upon by his host to give public consent to the espousals of the Duke of Orleans and Isabelle of Croye. The King complied, with a heavy sigh, and presently after urged a slight expostulation, founded upon the necessity of observing the wishes of the Duke himself.

«These have not been neglected,» said the Duke of Burgundy; «Crevecœur hath communicated with Monseigneur d'Orleans, and finds him (strange to say) so dead to the honour of wedding a royal bride, that he acceded to the proposal of marrying the Countess of Croye, as the kindest proposal which father could have made to him.»

«He is the more ungracious and thankless,» said Louis; «but the whole shall be as you, my cousin, will; if you can bring it about with consent of the parties themselves.»

«Fear not that,» said the Duke; and accordingly, not many minutes after the affair had been proposed, the Duke of Orleans and the Countess of Croye, the latter attended as on the preceding occasion, by the Countess of Crevecœur, and the Abbess of the Ursulines, were summoned to the presence of the princes, and heard from the mouth of Charles of Burgundy,

unobjected to by that of Louis, who sate in silent and moody consciousness of diminished consequence, that the union of their hands was designed by the wisdom of both princes, to confirm the perpetual alliance which in future should take place betwixt France and Burgundy.

The Duke of Orleans had much difficulty in suppressing the joy which he felt upon the proposal, and which delicacy rendered improper in the presence of Louis; and it required his habitual awe for that monarch, to enable him to rein in his delight, so much as merely to reply, «that his duty compelled him to place his choice at the disposal of his Sovereign.»

«Fair cousin of Orleans,» said Louis, with sullen gravity, «since I must speak on so unpleasant an occasion, it is needless for me to remind you, that my sense of your merits had led me to propose for you a match into my own family. But since my cousin of Burgundy thinks, that the disposing of your hand otherwise is the surest pledge of amity between his dominions and mine, I love both too well not to sacrifice to them my own hopes and wishes.»

The Duke of Orleans threw himself on his knees, and kissed,—and for once with sincerity of attachment,—the hand which the King, with averted countenance, extended to him. In fact, he, as well as most present, saw, in the reluctant acquiescence of this accomplished

dissembler, who even with that very purpose had suffered his reluctance to be visible, a King relinquishing his favourite project, and subjugating his paternal feelings to the necessities of state, and interest of his country. Even Burgundy was moved, and Orleans' heart smote him for the joy which he involuntarily felt on being freed from his engagement with the Princess Joan. If he had known how deeply the King was cursing him in his soul, and what thoughts of future revenge he was agitating, it is probable his own delicacy on the occasion would not have been so much hurt.

Charles next turned to the young countess, and bluntly announced the proposed match to her, as a matter which neither admitted delay or hesitation; adding, at the same time, that it was but a too favourable consequence of her intractability on a former occasion.

« My lord Duke and sovereign, » said Isabelle, summoning up all her courage, « I observe your grace's commands, and submit to them— »

« Enough, enough, » said the Duke, interrupting her, « we will arrange the rest.— Your Majesty, » he continued, addressing King Louis, « hath had a boar's hunt in the morning, what say you to rousing a wolf in the afternoon? »

The young countess saw the necessity of decision.— « Your grace mistakes my meaning, » she said, speaking though timidly, yet loudly

and decidedly enough to compel the Duke's attention, which, from some consciousness, he would otherwise have willingly denied to her. —«My submission,» she said, only respected those lands and estates which your grace's ancestors gave to mine, and which I resign to the House of Burgundy, if my Sovereign thinks my disobedience in this matter renders me unworthy to hold them.»

« Ha! Saint-George! » said the Duke, stamping furiously on the ground, « does the fool know in what presence she is—And to whom she speaks?»

« My lord,» replied she, still undismayed, « I am before my suzerain, and I hope a just one. If you deprive me of my lands, you take away all that your ancestors' generosity gave, and you break the only bonds which attach us together. You gave not this poor and persecuted form, still less the spirit which animates me—And these it is my purpose to dedicate to Heaven in the convent of the Ursulines, under the guidance of this holy mother abbess.»

The rage and astonishment of the Duke can hardly be conceived, unless we could estimate the surprise of a falcon, against whom a dove should ruffle its pinions in defiance.—« Will the holy mother receive you without an appanage?» he said, in a voice of scorn.

« If she doth her convent in the first instance

so much wrong,» said the Lady Isabelle, « I trust there is charity enough among the noble friends of my house, to make up some support for the orphan of Croye.»

« It is false!» said the Duke; « It is a base pretext to cover some secret and unworthy passion.—My Lord of Orleans, she shall be yours, if I drag her to the altar with my own hands!»

The Countess of Crevecœur, a high-spirited woman, and confident in her husband's merits and favour, could keep silent no longer.—«My lord,» she said, « your passions transport you into language utterly unworthy—The hand of no gentlewoman can be disposed of by force.»

« And it is no part of the duty of a Christian prince,» added the abbess, « to thwart the wishes of a pious soul, who, broken with the cares and persecutions of the world, is desirous to become the bride of Heaven.»

« Neither can my cousin of Orleans,» said Dunois, « with honour accept a proposal, to which the lady has thus publicly stated her objections.»

« If I were permitted,» said Orleans, on whose facile mind Isabelle's beauty had made a deep impression, « some time to endeavour to place my pretensions before the countess in more favourable light——»

« My lord,» said Isabelle, whose firmness was now fully supported by the encouragement

which she received from all around, «it were to no purpose—my mind is made up to decline this alliance, though far above my deserts.»

«Nor have I time,» said the Duke, «to wait till those whimsies are changed with the next change of the moon.—Monseigneur d'Orleans, she shall learn within this hour that obedience becomes matter of necessity.»

«Not in my behalf, sire,» answered the prince, who felt that he could not, with any show of honour, avail himself of the Duke's obstinate disposition; — «to have been once openly and positively refused, is enough for a Son of France. He cannot prosecute his addresses farther.»

The Duke darted one furious glance at Orleans, another at Louis; and reading in the countenance of the latter, in spite of his utmost efforts to suppress his feelings, a look of secret triumph, he became outrageous.

«Write,» he said to the secretary, «our doom of forfeiture and imprisonment against this disobedient and insolent minion. She shall to the Zucht-haus, to the penitentiary, to herd with those whose lives have rendered them her rivals in effrontery!»

There was a general murmur.

«My lord Duke,» said the Count of Crevecœur, taking the word for the rest, «this must be better thought on. We, your faithful vassals, cannot suffer such a dishonour to the

nobility and chivalry of Burgundy. If the countess hath done amiss, let her be punished —but in the manner that becomes her rank, and ours, who stand connected with her house by blood and alliance.»

The Duke paused a moment, and looked full at his counsellor with the stare of a bull, who, when compelled by the neat-herd from the road which he wishes to go, deliberates with himself whether to obey, or to rush on his driver and toss him into the air.

Prudence, however, prevailed over fury— he saw the sentiment was general in his council —was afraid of the advantages which Louis might derive from seeing dissension among his vassals; and probably—for he was rather of a coarse and violent, than of a malignant temper,—felt shame of his own dishonourable proposal.

«You are right,» he said, «Crevecœur, and I spoke hastily. Her fate shall be determined according to the rules of chivalry. Her flight to Liege hath given the signal for the bishop's murder. He that best avenges that deed, and brings us the head of the Wild Boar of Ardennes, shall claim her hand of us; and if she denies it, we can at least grant him her fiefs, leaving it to his generosity to allow her what means he will to retire into a convent.»

«Nay!» said the countess, «think I am the daughter of Count Reinold—of your father's

old, valiant, and faithful servant. Would you hold me out as a prize to the best sword-player?»

«Your ancestress,» said the Duke, «was won at a tourney—you shall be fought for in real mêlée. Only thus far, for Count Reinold's sake, the successful prizer shall be a gentleman, of unimpeached birth, and unstained bearings; but be he such, and the poorest who ever drew the tongue of a buckle through the strap of a sword-belt, he shall have at least the proffer of your hand. I swear it by Saint George, by my ducal crown, and by the order that I wear! —Ha! messires,» he added, turning to the nobles present, «this at least is, I think, conform to the rules of chivalry?»

Isabelle's remonstrances were drowned in a general and jubilant assent, above which was heard the voice of old Lord Crawford, regretting the weight of years that prevented his striking for so fair a prize. The Duke was gratified by the general applause, and his temper began to flow more smoothly like that of a swollen river when it hath subsided within its natural boundaries.

«Are we, to whom fate has given dames already,» said Crevecœur, «to be by-standers at this fair game? It does not consist with my honour to be so, for I have myself a vow to be paid at the expense of that tusked and bristled brute, De la Marck.»

«Strike boldly in, Crevecœur,» said the Duke; «win her, and if thou canst not wear her thyself, bestow her where thou wilt—on Count Stephen your nephew, if you list.»

«Gramercy, my lord!» said Crevecœur, «I will do my best in the battle; and should I be fortunate enough to be foremost, Stephen shall try his eloquence against that of the lady abbess.»

«I trust,» said Dunois, «that the chivalry of France are not excluded from this fair contest?»

«Heaven forbid! brave Dunois,» answered the Duke, «were it but for the sake of seeing you do your uttermost. But,» he added, «though there be no fault in the Lady Isabelle wedding a Frenchman, it will be necessary that the Count of Croye must become a subject of Burgundy.»

«Enough, enough,» said Dunois, «my bar sinister may never be surmounted by the coronet of Croye—I will live and die French. But yet, if I am to lose the lands, I will strike a blow for the lady.»

Le Balafré dared not speak aloud in such a presence, but he muttered to himself—

«Now Saunders Souplejaw, hold thine own! —thou always saidst the fortune of our house was to be won by marriage, and never had you such a chance to keep your word with us.»

«No one thinks of me,» said Le Glorieux, «who am sure to carry off the prize from all of you.»

«Right, my sapient friend,» said Louis; «when a woman is in the case, the greatest fool is ever the first in favour.»

While the princes and their nobles thus jested over her fate, the abbess and the Countess of Crevecœur endeavoured in vain to console Isabelle, who had withdrawn with them from the council-presence. The former assured her, that the Holy Virgin would frown on every attempt to withdraw a true votaress from the shrine of Saint Ursula; while the Countess of Crevecœur whispered more temporal consolation, that no true knight, who might succeed in the emprize proposed, would avail himself, against her inclinations, of the Duke's award; and that perhaps the successful competitor might prove one who should find such favour in her eyes as to reconcile her to obedience. Love, like despair, catches at straws; and, faint and vague as was the hope which this insinuation conveyed, the tears of the Countess Isabelle flowed more placidly while she dwelt upon it.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SALLY.

The wretch condemn'd with life to part,
Still, still on hope relies,
And every pang that rends the heart
Bids expectation rise.

Hope, like the glimmering taper's light,
Adorns and cheers the way;
And still, the darker grows the night,
Emits a brighter ray.

GOLDSMITH.

FEW days had passed ere Louis had received, with a smile of gratified vengeance, the intelligence, that his favourite and his counsellor, the Cardinal Balue, was groaning within a cage of iron, so disposed as scarce to permit him to enjoy repose in any posture except when recumbent; and of which, be it said in passing, he remained the unpitied tenant for nearly twelve years. The auxiliary forces which the Duke had required him to bring up had also appeared; and he comforted himself

that their numbers were sufficient to protect his person against violence, although too limited to cope, had such been his purpose, with the large army of Burgundy. He saw himself also at liberty, when time should suit, to resume his project of marriage between his daughter and the Duke of Orleans; and, although he was sensible of the indignity of serving with his noblest peers under the banners of his own vassal, and against the people whose cause he had abetted, he did not allow these circumstances to embarrass him in the meantime, trusting that a future day would bring him amends.—«For chance,» said he to his trusty Oliver, «may indeed gain one hit, but it is patience and wisdom which win the game at last.»

With such sentiments, upon a beautiful day in the latter end of harvest, the King mounted his horse; and, indifferent that he was looked upon rather as a part of the pageant of a victor, than in the light of an independent Sovereign surrounded by his guards and his chivalry, King Louis sallied from under the Gothic gateway of Peronne, to join the Burgundian army, which commenced at the same time their march against Liege.

Most of the ladies of distinction who were in the place, attended, dressed in their best array, upon the battlements and defences of the gate, to see the gallant show of the warriors setting

forth on the expedition. Thither had the Countess Crevecœur brought the Countess Isabelle. The latter attended very reluctantly; but the peremptory order of Charles had been, that she who was to bestow the palm in the tourney, should be visible to the knights who were about to enter the lists.

As they thronged out from under the arch, many a pennon and shield was to be seen, graced with fresh devices, expressive of the bearer's devoted resolution to become a competitor for a prize so fair. Here a charger was painted starting for the goal,—there an arrow aimed at a mark,—one knight bore a bleeding heart, indicative of his passion,—another a scull, and a coronet of laurels, showing his determination to win or die. Many others there were; and some so cunningly intricate and obscure, that they might have defied the most ingenious interpreter. Each knight, too, it may be presumed, put his courser to his mettle, and assumed his most gallant seat in the saddle, as he passed for a moment under the view of the fair bevy of dames and damsels, who encouraged their valour by their smiles, and the waving of kerchiefs and of veils. The Archer-guard, selected almost at will from the flower of the Scottish nation, drew general applause, from the gallantry and splendour of their appearance.

And there was one among these strangers,

who ventured on a demonstration of acquaintance with the Lady Isabelle, which had not been attempted even by the most noble of the French nobility. It was Quentin Durward, who, as he passed the ladies in his rank, presented to the Countess of Croye, on the point of his lance, the letter of her aunt.

« Now, by my honour, » said the Count of Crevecœur, « that is over insolent in an unworthy adventurer! »

« Do not call him so, Crevecœur, » said Dunois; « I have good reason to bear testimony to his gallantry—and in behalf of that lady, too. »

« You make words of nothing, » said Isabelle, blushing with shame, and partly with resentment; « it is a letter from my unfortunate aunt —She writes cheerfully, though her situation must be dreadful. »

« Let us hear, let us hear what says the Boar's bride, » said Crevecœur.

The Countess Isabelle read the letter, in which her aunt seemed determined to make the best of a bad bargain, and to console herself for the haste and indecorum of her wedding, by the happiness of being wedded to one of the bravest men of the age, who had just acquired a princedom by his valour. She implored her niece not to judge of her William (as she called him) by the report of others, but to wait till she knew him personally. He had his faults, perhaps,

but they were such as belonged to characters whom she had ever venerated. William was rather addicted to wine, but so was the gallant Sir Godfrey, their grandsire;—he was something hasty and sanguinary in his temper, such had been her brother, Reinold of blessed memory;—he was blunt in speech, few Germans were otherwise; and a little wilful and peremptory, but she believed all men loved to rule. More there was to the same purpose; and the whole concluded with the hope and request, that Isabelle would, by means of the bearer, endeavour her escape from the tyrant of Burgundy, and come to her loving kinswoman's court of Liege, where any little differences concerning their mutual rights of succession to the earldom might be adjusted by Isabelle's marrying Carl Ebersson—a bridegroom younger indeed than his bride, but that, as she (the Lady Hameline) might perhaps say from experience, was an inequality more easy to be endured than Isabelle could be aware of.

Here the Countess Isabelle stopped; the abbess observing, with a prim aspect, that she had read quite enough concerning such worldly vanities, and the Count of Crevecœur breaking out, « Aroint thee, deceitful witch!—Why this device smells rank as the toasted cheese in a rat-trap—Now fie, and double fie, upon the old decoy-duck!»

The Countess of Crevecœur gravely rebuked

her husband for his violence—« The Lady Hameline,» she said, « must have been deceived by De la Marck with a show of courtesy.»

« He show courtesy!» said the count—« I acquit him of all such dissimulation. You may as well expect courtesy from a literal wild boar—you may as well try to lay leaf-gold on old rusty gibbet-irons. No—idiot as she is, she is not quite goose enough to fall in love with the fox who has snapped her, and that in his very den. But you women are all alike—fair words carry it—and, I dare say, here is my pretty cousin impatient to join her aunt in this fool's paradise, and marry the Boar-Pig.»

« So far from being capable of such folly,» said Isabelle, « I am doubly desirous of vengeance on the murderers of the excellent bishop, because it will, at the same time, free my aunt from the villain's power.»

« Ah! there indeed spoke the voice of Croye!» exclaimed the count; and no more was said concerning the letter.

But while Isabelle read her aunt's epistle to her friends, it must be observed that she did not think it necessary to recite a certain *postscript*, in which the Countess Hameline, lady-like, gave an account of her occupations, and informed her niece, that she had laid aside for the present a surcoat which she was working for her husband, bearing the arms of Croye and la Marck in conjugal fashion, parted per pale, because

her William had determined, for purposes of policy, in the first action to have others dressed in his coat-armour, and himself to assume the arms of Orleans, with a bar sinister—in other words, those of Dunois. There was also a slip of paper in another hand, the contents of which the Countess did not think it necessary to mention, being simply these words—« If you hear not of me soon, and that by the trumpet of fame, conclude me dead, but not unworthy.»

A thought, hitherto repelled as wildly incredible, now glanced with double keenness through Isabelle's soul. As female wit seldom fails in the contrivance of means, she so ordered it that, ere the troops were fully on march, Quentin Durward received from an unknown hand the billet of Lady Hameline, marked with three crosses opposite to the postscript, and having these words subjoined—« He who feared not the arms of Orleans, when on the breast of their gallant owner, cannot dread them when displayed on that of a tyrant and murderer.» A thousand thousand times was this intimation kissed and pressed to the bosom of the young Scot! for it marshalled him on the path where both honour and love held out the reward, and possessed him with a secret unknown to others, by which to distinguish him whose death could alone give life to his hopes, and which he prudently resolved to lock up in his own bosom.

But Durward saw the necessity of acting otherwise respecting the information communicated by Hayraddin, since the proposed sally of De la Marck, unless heedfully guarded against, might prove the destruction of the besieging army; so difficult was it, in the tumultuous warfare of those days, to recover from a nocturnal surprise. After pondering on the matter, he formed the additional resolution, that he would not communicate the intelligence save personally, and to both the princes while together; perhaps, because he felt that to mention so well-contrived and hopeful a scheme to Louis whilst in private, might be too strong a temptation to the wavering probity of that Monarch, and lead him to assist, rather than repel, the intended sally. He determined, therefore, to watch for an opportunity of revealing the secret whilst Louis and Charles were met, which, as they were not particularly fond of the constraint imposed by each other's society, was not likely soon to occur.

Meanwhile the march continued, and the confederates soon entered the territories of Liege. Here the Burgundian soldiers, at least a part of them, composed of those bands who had acquired the title of *Escorcheurs*, or flayers, showed, by the usage which they gave the inhabitants, under pretext of avenging the bishop's death, that they well deserved that

honourable title; while their conduct greatly prejudiced the cause of Charles, the aggrieved inhabitants, who might otherwise have been passive in the quarrel, assuming arms in self-defence, harassing his march, by cutting off small parties, and falling back before the main body upon the city itself, thus augmenting the numbers and desperation of those who had resolved to defend it. The French, few in number, and those the choice soldiers of the country, kept, according to the King's orders, close by their respective standards, and observed the strictest discipline; a contrast which increased the suspicions of Charles, who could not help remarking, that the troops of Louis demeaned themselves as if they were rather friends to the Liegeois, than allies of Burgundy.

At length, without experiencing any serious opposition, the army arrived in the rich valley of the Maes, and before the large and populous city of Liege. The Castle of Schonwaldt they found had been totally destroyed, and learned that William de la Marck, whose sole virtues were of a military cast, had withdrawn his whole forces into the city, and was determined to avoid the encounter of the chivalry of France and Burgundy in the open field. But the invaders were not long of experiencing the danger which must always exist in attacking a large town, however open, if the inhabitants are disposed to defend it desperately.

A part of the Burgundian vanguard, conceiving that, from the dismantled and breached state of the walls, they had nothing to do but to march into Liege at their ease, entered one of the suburbs with the shouts of «Burgundy, Burgundy! Kill, kill—all is ours—Remember Louis of Bourbon!» But as they marched in disorder through the narrow streets, and were partly dispersed for the purpose of pillage, a large body of the inhabitants issued suddenly from the town, fell furiously upon them, and made considerable slaughter. De la Marck even availed himself of the breaches in the walls, which permitted the defenders to issue out at different points, and by taking separate routes into the contested suburb, to assail in the front, flank, and rear, at once, the assailants, who, stunned by the furious, unexpected, and multiplied nature of the resistance offered, could hardly stand to their arms. The evening, which began to close, added to the confusion.

When this news was brought to Duke Charles, he was furious with rage, which was not much appeased by the offer of King Louis, to send the French men-at-arms into the suburbs, to rescue and bring off the Burgundian vanguard. Rejecting this offer briefly, he would have put himself at the head of his own guards; but Hymbercourt and Crevecœur entreated him to leave the service to them, and marching

into the scene of action at two points, with more order and proper arrangement for mutual support, these two celebrated captains succeeded in repulsing the Liegeois, and in extricating the vanguard, who lost, besides prisoners, no fewer than eight hundred men, of whom about a hundred were men-at-arms. The prisoners, however, were not numerous, most of them having been rescued by d'Hymbercourt, who now proceeded to occupy the contested suburb, and to place guards opposite to the town, from which it was divided by an open space, or esplanade, of five or six hundred yards, left free of buildings for the purposes of defence. There was no moat betwixt the suburb and town, the ground being rocky in that place. A gate fronted the suburb, from which sallies might be easily made, and the wall was pierced by two or three of those breaches which Duke Charles had caused to be made after the battle of Saint Tron, and which had been hastily repaired with mere barricades of timber. D'Hymbercourt turned two culverins on the gate, and placed two others opposite to the breach to repel any sally from the city, and then returned to the Burgundian army, which he found in great disorder.

In fact, the main body and rear of the numerous army of the Duke had continued to advance, while the broken and repulsed vanguard was in the act of retreating; and they

had come into collision with each other, to the great confusion of both. The necessary absence of Hymbercourt, who discharged all the duties of mareschal-du-camp, or, as we should now say, of quarter-master-general, augmented the disorder; and, to complete the whole, the night sunk down dark as a wolf's mouth; there fell a thick and heavy rain, and the ground, on which the beleaguering army must needs take up their position, was muddy and intersected with many canals. It is scarce possible to form an idea of the confusion which prevailed in the Burgundian army, where leaders were separated from their soldiers, and soldiers from their standards and officers; where every one, from the highest to the lowest, was seeking shelter and accommodation where he could find it; where the wearied and wounded, who had been engaged in the battle, were calling in vain for shelter and refreshment; and while those who knew nothing of the disaster were pressing on to have their share in the sack of the place, which they had no doubt was proceeding merrily.

When Hymbercourt returned, he had a task to perform of incredible difficulty, and embittered by the reproaches of his master, who made no allowance for the still more necessary duty in which he had been engaged, until the temper of the gallant soldier began to give way under his unreasonable reproaches.—« I went

hence to restore some order in the van,» he said, «and left the main body under your grace's own guidance; and now, on my return, I can neither find that we have front, flank, or rear, so utter is the confusion.»

«We are the more like a barrel of herrings,» answered Le Glorieux, «which is the most natural resemblance for a Flemish army.»

The jester's speech made the Duke laugh, and perhaps prevented a farther prosecution of the altercation betwixt him and his general.

By dint of great exertion, a small *lust-haus*, or country-villa of some wealthy citizen of Liege, was secured and cleared of other occupants, for the accommodation of the Duke and his immediate attendants; and the authority of Hymbercourt and Crevecœur at length established a guard in the vicinity, of about forty men-at-arms, who lighted a very large fire, made with the timber of the out-houses, which they pulled down for the purpose.

A little to the left of this villa, and betwixt it and the suburb, which, as we have said, was opposite to the city-gate, and occupied by the Burgundian vanguard, lay another pleasure-house, surrounded by a garden and court-yard, and having two or three small closes or fields in the rear of it. In this the King of France established his own head-quarters. He did not himself pretend to be a soldier, further than a natural indifference to danger and much

sagacity qualified him to be called such; but he was always careful to employ the most skilful in that profession, and reposed in them the confidence they merited. Louis and his immediate attendants occupied the house; a part of his Scottish Guard were placed in the court, where there were out-houses and sheds to shelter them from the weather; the rest were stationed in the garden. The rest of the French were quartered closely together and in good order, with alarm-posts appointed, in case of their having to sustain an attack.

Dunois and Crawford, assisted by several old officers and soldiers, amongst whom Le Balafré was conspicuous for his diligence, contrived, by breaking down walls, making openings through hedges, filling up ditches, and the like, to facilitate the communication of the troops with each other, and the orderly combination of the whole in case of necessity.

Meanwhile, the King judged it proper to go without further ceremony to the quarters of the Duke of Burgundy, to ascertain what was to be the order of proceeding, and what cooperation was expected from him. His presence occasioned a sort of council of war to be held, of which Charles might not otherwise have dreamed. It was then that Quentin Durward prayed earnestly to be admitted, as having something of importance to deliver to the two princes. This was obtained without much

difficulty, and great was the astonishment of Louis, when he heard him calmly and distinctly relate the purpose of William de la Marck, to make a sally upon the camp of the besiegers, under the dress and banners of the French. Louis would probably have been much better pleased to have had such important news communicated in private; but as the whole story had been publicly told, he only observed, « that, whether true or false, such a report concerned them most materially.»

« Not a whit!—not a whit,» said the Duke, carelessly. « Had there been such a purpose as this young man announces, it had not been communicated to me by an archer of the Scottish Guard.»

« However that may be,» answered Louis, « I pray you, fair cousin, you, and your captains, to attend, that to prevent the unpleasing consequences of such an attack, should it be made unexpectedly, I will cause my soldiers to wear white scarfs over their armour.—Dunois, see it given out on the instant—that is,» he added, « if our brother and general approves of it.»

« I see no objection,» replied the Duke, « if the chivalry of France are willing to run the risk of having the name of Knights of the Smock-sleeve bestowed on them in future.»

« It would be a right well adapted title, friend Charles,» said Le Glorieux, « consider-

ing that a woman is the reward of the most valiant.»

« Well spoken, Sagacity,» said Louis—« Cousin, good night, I will go arm me.—By the way, what if I win the countess with mine own hand?»

« Your Majesty,» said the Duke, in an altered tone of voice, « must then become a true Fleming.»

« I cannot,» answered Louis, in a tone of the most sincere confidence, « be more so than I am already, could I but bring you, my dear cousin, to believe it.»

The Duke only replied by wishing the King good night, in a tone resembling the snort of a shy horse, starting from the caress of the rider when he is about to mount, and is soothing him to stand still.

« I could pardon all his duplicity,» said the Duke to Crevecœur, « but cannot forgive his supposing me capable of the gross folly of being duped by his professions.»

Louis, too, had his confidences with Oliver le Dain when he returned to his own quarters. —« This Scot,» he said, « is such a mixture of shrewdness and simplicity, that I know not what to make of him. *Pasques-Dieu!* think of his unpardonable folly in bringing out honest de la Marck's plan of a sally before the face of Burgundy, Crevecœur, and all of them, instead of rounding it in my ear, and giving

me at least the choice of abetting or defeating it!»

« It is better as it is, Sire, » said Oliver; « there are many in your present train who would scruple to assail Burgundy undefied, or to ally themselves with de la Marck.»

« Thou art right, Oliver. Such fools there are in the world, and we have no time to reconcile their scruples by a little dose of self-interest. We must be true men, Oliver, and good allies of Burgundy, for this night at least, —time may give us chance of a better game. Go, tell no man to unarm himself; and let them shoot, in case of necessity, as sharply on those who cry *France* and *St Denis!* as if they cried Hell and Satan! I will myself sleep in my armour. Let Crawford place Quentin Durward on the extreme point of our line of sentinels, next to the city. Let him e'en have the first benefit of the sally which he has announced to us—if his luck bear him out, it is the better for him. But take an especial care of Martius Galeotti, and see he remain in the rear, in a place of the most absolute safety—he is even but too venturous; and, like a fool, would be both swordsman and philosopher. See to these things, Oliver, and good night—Our Lady of Clery, and Monseigneur Saint Martin of Tours, be gracious to my slumbers!»

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SALLY.

He look'd, and saw what numbers numberless
The city-gates outpour'd.

Paradise Regained.

A DEAD silence soon reigned over that great host which lay in leaguer before Liege. For a long time the cries of the soldiers repeating their signals, and seeking to join their several banners, sounded like the howling of bewildered dogs seeking their masters. But at length, overcome with weariness through the fatigues of the day, the dispersed soldiers crowded under such shelter as they could light upon, and those who could find none sunk down, through very fatigue, under walls, hedges, and such temporary protection, there to await for morning,—a morning which some of them were never to behold. A dead sleep fell on almost all, excepting those who kept a faint and weary watch by the lodgings of the

King and the Duke. The dangers and hopes of the morrow—even the schemes of glory which many of the young nobility had founded upon the splendid prize held out to him who should avenge the murdered Bishop of Liege—glided from their recollection as they lay stupified with fatigue and sleep. But not so with Quentin Durward. The knowledge that he alone was possessed of the means of distinguishing la Marck in the contest—the recollection by whom that information had been communicated, and the fair augury which might be drawn from her conveying it to him—the thought that his fortune had brought him to a most perilous and doubtful crisis indeed, but one where there was still, at least, a chance of his coming off triumphant, banished every desire to sleep, and strung his nerves with vigour, which defied fatigue.

Posted, by the King's express order, on the extreme point between the French quarters and the town, a good way to the right of the suburb which we have mentioned, he sharpened his eye, to penetrate the mass which lay before him, and excited his ears, to catch the slightest sound which might announce any commotion in the beleaguered city. But its huge clocks had successively knelled three hours after midnight, and all continued still and silent as the grave.

At length, and when he began to think the

attack would be deferred till day-break, and joyfully recollected that there would be then light enough to descry the band sinister across the Fleur-de-lis of Orleans, he thought he heard in the city a humming murmur, like that of disturbed bees mustering for the defence of their hives. He listened—the noise continued; but it was of a character so undistinguished by any peculiar or precise sound, that it might be the murmur of a wind arising among the boughs of a distant grove, or perhaps some stream swollen by the late rain, which was discharging itself into the sluggish Maes with more than usual sound. Quentin was prevented by these considerations from instantly giving the alarm, which, if done carelessly, would have been a heavy offence. But, when the noise rose louder, and seemed pouring at the same time towards his own post, and towards the suburb, he deemed it his duty to fall back as silently as possible, and call his uncle, who commanded the small body of Archers destined to his support. All were on their feet in a moment, and with as little noise as possible. In less than a second, Lord Crawford was at their head, and, dispatching an Archer to alarm the King and his household, drew back his little party to some distance behind their watch-fire, that they might not be seen by its light. The rushing sound, which had approached them more nearly

seemed suddenly to have ceased; but they still heard distinctly the more distant heavy tread of a large body of men approaching the suburb.

« The lazy Burgundians are asleep on their post,» whispered Crawford; « make for the suburb, Cunningham, and awaken the stupid oxen.»

« Keep well to the rear as you go,» said Durward; « if ever I heard the tread of mortal men, there is a strong body interposed between us and the suburb.»

« Well said, Quentin, my dainty callant,» said Crawford; « thou art a soldier beyond thy years. They only make halt till the others come forward.—I would I had some knowledge where they are!»

« I will creep forward, my lord,» said Quentin, « and endeavour to bring you information.»

« Do so, my bonny chield; thou hast sharp ears and eyes, and good will—but take heed—I would not lose thee for two and a plack.»

Quentin, with his harquebuss ready prepared, stole forward, through ground which he had reconnoitered carefully in the twilight of the preceding evening, until he was not only certain that he was in the neighbourhood of a very large body of men, who were standing fast betwixt the King's quarters and the sub-

urbs, but also that there was a detached party of smaller number in advance, and very close to him. They seemed to whisper together, as if uncertain what to do next. At last, the steps of two or three *enfans perdus*, detached from that smaller party, approached him so near as twice a pike's length. Seeing it impossible to retreat undiscovered, Quentin called out aloud, « *Qui vive ?*» and was answered by « *Vive Li—Li—ege—c'est-à-dire,*» (added he who spoke, correcting himself,) « *vive la France!*»—Quentin instantly fired his harquebuss—a man groaned and fell, and he himself, under the instant but vague discharge of a number of pieces, the fire of which ran in a disorderly manner along the column, and showed it to be very numerous, hastened back to the main guard.

« Admirably done, my brave boy!» said Crawford, « Now, callants, draw in within the court-yard—they are too many to mell with in the open field.»

They drew within the court-yard and garden accordingly, where they found all in great order, and the King prepared to mount his horse.

« Whither away, Sire?» said Crawford; « you are safest here with your own people.»

« Not so,» said Louis; « I must instantly to the Duke. He must be convinced of our good faith at this critical moment, or we shall have

both Liegeois and Burgundians upon us at once.» And, springing on his horse, he bade Dunois command the French troops without the house, and Crawford the Archer-guard and other household troops within the lust-haus and its inclosures. He commanded them to bring up two sakers, and as many falconets (pieces of cannon for the field), which had been left about half a mile in the rear; and, in the mean time, to make good their posts, but by no means to advance, whatever success they might obtain; and, having given these orders, rode off to the Duke's quarters.

The delay which permitted these arrangements to be carried fully into effect was owing to Quentin's having fortunately shot the proprietor of the house, who acted as guide to the column which was designed to attack it, and whose attack, had it been made instantly, might have been successful.

Durward, who, by the King's order, attended him to the Duke's, found the latter in a state of choleric distemperature, which almost prevented his discharging the duties of a general, which were never more necessary; for besides the noise of a close and furious combat which had now taken place in the suburb upon the left of their whole army,—besides the attack upon the King's quarters, which was fiercely maintained in the centre,—a third column of Liegeois, of even superior numbers, had filed

out from a more distant breach, and, marching by lanes, vineyards, and passes, known to themselves, had fallen upon the right flank of the Burgundian army, who, alarmed at their war-cries of *Vive la France!* and *Denis Montjoye!* which mingled with those of *Liege* and *Rouge Sanglier*, and at the idea thus inspired, of treachery on the part of their French confederates, made a very desultory and imperfect resistance; while the Duke, foaming, and swearing, and cursing his liege Lord and all that belonged to him, called out to shoot with bow and gun on all that was French, whether black or white,—alluding to the sleeves with which Louis's soldiers had designated themselves.

The arrival of the King, only attended by Le Balafré and Quentin, and half a score of Archers, restored confidence. Hymbercourt, Crevecœur, and others of the Burgundian leaders, whose names were then the praise and dread of war, rushed devotedly into the conflict; and, while some hastened to bring up more distant troops, to whom the panic had not extended, others threw themselves into the tumult, re-animated the instinct of discipline, and while the Duke toiled in the front like an ordinary man-at-arms, brought their men by degrees into array, and dismayed the assailants by the use of their artillery. The conduct of Louis, on the other hand, was that

of a calm, collected, sagacious leader, who neither sought nor avoided danger, but showed so much self-possession and sagacity, that the Burgundian leaders readily obeyed the orders which he issued.

The scene was now become in the utmost degree animated and horrible. On the left the suburb, after a fierce contest, had been set on fire, and a wide and dreadful conflagration did not prevent the burning ruins from being still disputed. On the centre, the French troops, though pressed by immense odds, kept up so close and constant a fire, that the little pleasure-house shone bright with a martyr's crown of flames. On the left, the battle swayed backwards and forwards with varied success, as fresh reinforcements poured out of the town, or were brought forward from the rear of the Burgundian host; and the strife continued with unremitting fury for three mortal hours, which at length brought the dawn, so much desired by the besiegers. The enemy, at this period, seemed to be slackening their efforts upon the right and in the centre, and several discharges of cannon were heard from the lust-haus.

«Go,» said the King, to Le Balafré and Quentin, the instant his ear had caught the sound; « they have got up the sakers and falconets—the lust-haus is safe, blessed be the Holy Virgin!—Tell Dunois to move this way, but rather nearer the city, with all our men-at-arms,

excepting what he may leave for the defence of the house, and cut in between those thick-headed Liegeois on the right and the city, from which they are supplied with recruits.»

The uncle and nephew galloped off to Dunois and Crawford, who, tired of their defensive war, joyfully obeyed the summons, and, filing out at the head of a gallant body of about two hundred French gentlemen, besides squires, and the greater part of the Archers, marched across the field, trampling down the wounded, till they gained the flank of the large body of Liegois, by whom the right of the Burgundians had been so fiercely assailed. The increasing day-light discovered that the enemy were continuing to pour out from the city, either for the purpose of continuing the battle on that point, or of bringing safely off the forces who were already engaged.

«By Heaven!» said old Crawford to Dunois, «were I not certain it is *thou* that art riding by my side, I would say I saw thee among yonder banditti and burghers, marshalling and arraying them with thy mace—only, if yon be thou, thou art bigger than thou art wont to be. Art thou sure yonder armed leader is not thy wraith, thy double-man, as these Flemings call it?»

«My wraith!» said Dunois; «I know not what you mean. But yonder is a caitiff with my bearings displayed on crest and shield,

whom I will presently punish for his insolence.»

«In the name of all that is noble, my lord, leave the vengeance to me,» said Quentin.

«To *thee* indeed, young man!» said Dunois; «that is a modest request.—No—these things brook no substitution.»—Then turning on his saddle, he called out to those around him, «Gentlemen of France, form your line—level your lances! Let the rising sunbeams shine through the battalions of yonder swine of Liege and hogs of Ardennes, that masquerade in our ancient coats.»

The men-at-arms answered with a loud shout of « A Dunois! a Dunois!—Long live the bold Bastard!—Orleans to the rescue!»—And, with their leader in the centre, charged at full gallop. They encountered no timid enemy. The large body which they charged consisted (excepting some mounted officers) entirely of infantry, who, setting the butt of their lances against their feet, the front rank kneeling, the second stooping, and those behind presenting their spears over their heads, offered such resistance to the rapid charge of the men-at-arms as the hedgehog presents to his enemy. Few were able to make way through that iron-wall; but of those few was Dunois, who, giving spur to his horse, and making the noble animal leap more than twelve feet at a bound, fairly broke his way into the middle of the phalanx, and

made towards the object of his animosity. What was his surprise to find Quentin still by his side, and fighting in the same front with himself—youth, desperate courage, and the determination to do or die, having still kept him abreast with the best knight in Europe, for such was Dunois reported, and truly reported, at the period.

Their spears were soon broken; but the Lanzknechts were unable to withstand the blows of their long heavy swords; while the horses and riders, armed in complete steel, sustained little injury from their lances. Still they were contending with rival efforts to burst forward to the spot where he who had usurped the armorial bearings of Dunois was doing the duty of a good and valiant leader, when Dunois, observing the boar's head and tusks in another part of the conflict, called out to Quentin, «Thou art worthy to avenge the arms of Orleans! I leave thee the task.—Balafré, support your nephew; but let none dare to interfere with Dunois' boar-hunt.»

That Quentin Durward joyfully acquiesced in this division of labour cannot be doubted, and each pressed forward upon his separate object, followed and defended from behind, by such as were able to keep up with them.

But at this moment the column which De la Marck had proposed to support, when his own course was arrested by the charge of Dunois,

had lost all the advantages they had gained during the night; while the Burgundians, with returning day, had resumed those which belong to superior discipline. The great mass of Liegeois were compelled to retreat, and at length to flight; and, falling back on those who were engaged with the French men-at-arms, the whole became a confused tide of fighters flyers, and pursuers, which rolled itself towards the city walls, and at last was poured into the ample and undefended breach through which the Liegeois had sallied.

Quentin made more than human exertions to overtake the special object of his pursuit, who was still in his sight, striving, by voice and example, to renew the battle, and bravely supported by a chosen party of Lanzknechts. Le Balafré, and several of his comrades, attached themselves to Quentin, much marvelling at the extraordinary gallantry displayed by so young a soldier. On the very brink of the breach De la Marck—for it was himself—succeeded in effecting a momentary stand, and repelling some of the most forward of the pursuers. He had a mace of iron in his hand, before which every thing seemed to go down, and was so covered with blood, that it was almost impossible to discern the bearings on his shield which had so much incensed Dunois.

Quentin now found little difficulty in singling him out; for the commanding situation of

which he had possessed himself, and the use he made of his terrible mace, caused many of the assailants to seek safer points of attack than that where so desperate a defender presented himself. But Quentin, to whom the importance attached to victory over this formidable antagonist was better known, sprung from his horse at the bottom of the breach, and letting the noble animal, the gift of the Duke of Orleans, run loose through the tumult, ascended the ruins, to measure swords with the Boar of Ardennes. The latter, as if he had seen his intention, turned towards Durward with mace uplifted; and they were on the point of encounter, when a dreadful shout of triumph, of tumult, and of despair, announced that the besiegers were entering the city at another point, and in the rear of those who defended the breach. Assembling around him, by voice and bugle, the desperate partners of his desperate fortune, de la Marck at these appalling sounds abandoned the breach, and endeavoured to effect his retreat towards a part of the city from which he might escape to the other side of the Maes. His immediate followers formed a deep body of well-disciplined men, who, never having given quarter, were resolved now not to ask it, and who, in that hour of despair, threw themselves into such order, that their front occupied the whole breadth of the street, through which they slow-

ly retired, making head from time to time, and checking the pursuers, many of whom began to seek a safer occupation, by breaking into the houses for plunder. It is therefore probable that De La Marck might have effected his escape, his disguise concealing him from those who promised themselves to win honour and grandeur upon his head, but for the staunch pursuit of Quentin, his uncle Le Balafré, and some of his comrades. At every pause which was made by the Lanzknechts, a furious combat took place betwixt them and the Archers, and in every mêlée Quentin sought De La Marck; but the latter, whose present object was to retreat, seemed to evade his purpose of bringing him to single combat. The confusion was general in every direction. The shrieks and cries of women, the yelling of the terrified inhabitants, now subjected to the extremity of military license, sounded horribly shrill amid the shouts of battle,—like the voice of misery and despair, contending with that of fury and violence, which should be heard farthest and loudest.

It was just when De la Marck, retiring through this infernal scene, had passed the door of a small chapel of peculiar sanctity, that the shouts of « France! France!—Burgundy! Burgundy!» apprized him that a part of the besiegers were entering the farther end of the street, which was a narrow one, and that his

retreat was cut off.—« Conrade,» he said, « take all the men with you, and charge yonder fellows roundly, and break through them if you can—with me it is over. I am man enough, now that I am brought to bay, to send some of these vagabond Scots to hell before me.»

His lieutenant obeyed, and, with most of the few Lanzknechts who remained alive, hurried to the further end of the street, with the purpose of charging those Burgundians who were advancing, and so breaking their way. About six of De la Marck's best men remained to perish with their master, and fronted the Archers, who were not many more in number.—« Sanglier! Sanglier! Hola! gentlemen of Scotland,» said he, waving his mace, « who longs to win a coronet,—who strikes at the Boar's-head? —You, young man, have, methinks, a hankering, but you must win ere you wear it.»

Quentin heard but imperfectly the words, which were partly lost in the hollow helmet; but the action could not be mistaken, and he had but time to bid his uncle and comrades, as they were gentlemen, to stand back, when De la Marck sprung upon him with a bound like a tiger, aiming at the same time a blow with his mace, so as to make his hand and foot keep time together, and giving his stroke the full advantage of the descent of his leap; but, light of foot, and quick of eye, Quentin leaped

aside, and disappointed an aim which would have been fatal had it taken effect.

They then closed, like the wolf and the wolf-dog, their comrades on either side remaining inactive spectators, for Le Balafré roared out for fair play, adding, « that he would venture his nephew on him, were he as wight as Wallace.»

Neither was his confidence unjustified; for, although the blows of the despairing robber fell like those of the hammer on the anvil, yet the quick motions and dexterous swordsmanship of the young Archer enabled him to escape, and to requite them with the point of his less noisy, though more fatal weapon; and that so often, and so effectually, that the huge strength of his antagonist began to give way to fatigue, while the ground on which he stood became a puddle of blood. Yet still, unabated in courage and ire, he fought on with as much mental energy as at first, and Quentin's victory seemed dubious and distant, when a female voice behind him called him by his name, ejaculating, « Help! help! for the sake of the blessed Virgin!»

He turned his head, and with a single glance beheld Gertrude Pavillon, her mantle stripped from her shoulders, dragged forcibly along by a French soldier, one of several, who, breaking into the chapel close by, had seized, as their

prey, on the terrified females who had taken refuge there.

«Wait me but one moment,» exclaimed Quentin to De la Marck, and sprung to extricate his benefactress from a situation of which he conjectured all the dangers.

«I wait no man's pleasure,» said De la Marck, flourishing his mace, and beginning to retreat —glad, no doubt, at being free of so formidable an assailant.

«You shall wait mine though, by your leave,» said Balafré; «I will not have my nephew baulked.»—So saying, he instantly assaulted De la Marck with his two-handed sword.

Quentin found, in the meanwhile, that the rescue of Gertrude was a task more difficult than could be finished in one moment. Her captor, supported by his comrades, refused to relinquish his prize, and whilst Durward, aided by two of his countrymen, endeavoured to compel him to do so, the former beheld the chance which Fortune had so kindly offered him for fortune and happiness, glide out of his reach; so that when he stood at length in the street with the liberated Gertrude, there was no one near them. Totally forgetting the defenceless situation of his companion, he was about to spring away in pursuit of the Boar of Ardennes, as the greyhound tracks the deer, when, clinging to him in her despair, she exclaimed, «For the sake of your mother's honour, leave me

not here!—As you are a gentleman, protect me to my father's house, which once sheltered you and the Lady Isabelle!—For her sake, leave me not!»

Her call was agonizing, but it was irresistible; and bidding a mental adieu, with unutterable bitterness of feeling, to all the gay hopes which had carried him through that bloody day, and which, at one moment, seemed to approach consummation, Quentin, like an unwilling spirit, who obeys a talisman which he cannot resist, protected Gertrude to Pavillon's house, and arrived in time to protect that and the Syndic himself, against the fury of the licentious soldiery.

Meantime, the King and the Duke of Burgundy entered the city on horseback, and through one of the breaches. They were both in complete armour, but the latter, covered with blood from the plume to the spur, drove his steed furiously up the breach, which Louis surmounted with the stately pace of one who leads a procession. They dispatched orders to stop the sack of the city, which had already commenced, and to assemble their scattered troops. The princes themselves proceeded towards the great church, both for the protection of many of the distinguished inhabitants, who had taken refuge there, and in order to hold a sort of military council after they had heard high mass.

Busied as other officers of his rank, in collecting those under his command, Lord Crawford, at the turning of one of the streets which lead to the Maes, met Le Balafré sauntering composedly towards the river, holding in his hand, by the gory locks, a human head, with as much indifference as a fowler carries a game-pouch.

«How now, Ludovic!» said his commander, «what are ye doing with that carrion?»

«It is all that is left of a bit of work which my nephew shaped out, and nearly finished, and I put the last hand to,» said Le Balafré—«A good fellow that I dispatched yonder, and who prayed me to throw his head into the Maes.—Men have queer fancies when old Small-Back is gripping them; but Small-Back must lead down the dance with us all in our time.»

«And you are going to throw that head into the Maes!» said Crawford, looking more attentively on the ghastly memorial of mortality.

«Ay, truly am I,» said Ludovic Leslie. «If you refuse a dying man his boon, you are like to be haunted with his ghost, and I love to sleep sound at nights.»

«You must take your chance of the ghaist, man,» said Crawford; «for, by my soul, there is more lies on that dead pow than you think for. Come along with me—not a word more—Come along with me.»

«Nay, for that matter,» said Le Balafré, «I made him no promise; for, in truth, I had off his head before the tongue was well done wagging; and as I feared him not living, by Saint Martin of Tours, I fear him as little when he is dead. Besides, my little gossip, the friar of St Martin's, will lend me a pot of holy water.»

When high mass had been said in the Cathedral Church of Liege, and the terrified town was restored to some moderate degree of order, Louis and Charles, with their peers around, proceeded to hear the claims of those who had any to make for services performed during the battle. Those which respected the County of Croye and its fair mistress were first received, and, to the disappointment of sundry claimants, who had thought themselves sure of the rich prize, there seemed doubt and mystery to involve their several pretensions. Crevecœur showed a boar's hide, such as De la Marck usually wore; Dunois produced a cloven shield, with his armorial bearings; and there were others, who claimed the merit of having dispatched the murderer of the bishop, producing similar tokens—the rich reward fixed on De la Marck's head having brought death to all who were armed in his resemblance.

There was much noise and contest among the competitors, and Charles (internally regretting the rash promise which had placed the

hand and wealth of his fair vassal on such a hazard) was in hopes he might find means of evading all these conflicting claims, when Crawford pressed forward into the circle, dragging Le Balafré after him, who, awkward and bashful, followed like an unwilling mastiff towed on in a leash, as his leader exclaimed, —«Away with your hoofs and hides, and painted iron !— No one, save he who slew the Boar, can show the tusks!»

So saying, he flung on the floor the bloody head, easily known as that of De la Marck, by the singular conformation of the jaws, which in reality had a certain resemblance to those of the animal whose name he bore, and which was instantly recognized by all who had seen him.

«Crawford,» said Louis, while Charles sate silent, in gloomy and displeased surprise, «I trust it is one of my trusty Scots who has won this prize?»

«It is Ludovic Leslie, Sire, whom we call Le Balafré,» replied the old soldier.

«But is he noble?» said the Duke; «is he of gentle blood?—otherwise our promise is void.»

«He is a cross ungainly piece of wood enough,» said Crawford, looking at the tall, awkward, embarrassed figure of the Archer; «but I will warrant him a branch of the tree of Rothes for all that—and they have been as noble as any

house in France or Burgundy, ever since it is told of their founder that,

Between the Less-lee and the mair
He slew the Knight, and left him there.»

«There is then no help for it,» said the Duke; «and the fairest and richest heiress in Burgundy must be the wife of a rude mercenary soldier like this, or die secluded in a convent —and she the only child of our faithful Reginald de Croye!—I have been too rash.»

And a cloud settled on his brow, to the surprise of his peers, who seldom saw him evince the slightest token of regret for an adopted resolution.

«Hold, but an instant,» said the Lord Crawford, «it may be better than your grace conjectures. Hear but what this cavalier has to say. —Speak out, man, and a murrain to thee,» he added apart to Le Balafré.

But that blunt soldier, though he could make a shift to express himself intelligibly enough to King Louis, to whose familiarity he was habituated, yet found himself incapable of enunciating his resolution before so splendid an assembly as that before which he then stood; and after having turned his shoulder to the princess, and preluded with a hoarse chuckling laugh, and two or three tremendous contortions of countenance, he was only able to

pronounce the words, «Saunders Souplejaw—» and then stuck fast.

«May it please your Majesty, and your grace,» said Crawford,» I must speak for my countryman and old comrade. You shall understand, that he has had it prophesied to him by a seer in his own land, that the fortune of his house is to be made by marriage; but as he is, like myself, something the worse for the wear,—loves the wine-house better than a lady's summer-parlour, and, in short, having some barrack tastes and likings, which would make greatness in his own person rather an encumbrance to him, he hath acted by my advice, and resigns the pretensions acquired by the fate of slaying William de la Marck, to him by whom the Wild Boar was actually brought to bay, who is his maternal nephew.»

«I will vouch for that youth's services and prudence,» said King Louis, overjoyed to see that fate had thrown so gallant a prize to one over whom he had some influence. «Without his prudence and vigilance we had been ruined—It was he who made us aware of the night-sally.»

«I then,» said Charles, «owe him some reparation for doubting his veracity.»

«And I can attest his gallantry as a man-at-arms,» said Dunois.

«But,» interrupted Crevecœur, «though the

uncle be a Scottish *gentillâtre*, that makes not the nephew necessarily so.»

« He is of the House of Durward,» said Crawford; « descended from that Allan Durward who was High Steward of Scotland.»

« Nay, if it be young Durward,» said Crevecœur, « I say no more.—Fortune has declared herself on his side too plainly for me to struggle further with her humoursome ladyship.»

« We have yet to inquire,» said Charles, thoughtfully, « what the fair lady's sentiments may be towards this fortunate adventurer.»

« By the mass!» said Crevecœur, « I have but too much reason to believe your grace will find her more amenable to authority than on former occasions.—But why should I grudge this youth his preferment? since, after all, it is sense, firmness, and gallantry, which have put him in possession of WEALTH, RANK, and BEAUTY!»

I HAD already sent these sheets to the press, concluding, as I thought, with a moral of excellent tendency for the encouragement of all fair-haired, light-eyed, long-legged emigrants from my native country, who might be willing in stirring times to take up the gallant profession of Cavalieros of Fortune. But a friendly monitor, one of those who like the lump of sugar which is found at the bottom of a tea-cup, as well as

the flavour of the souchong itself, has entered a bitter remonstrance, and insists that I should give a precise and particular account of the espousals of the young heir of Glen-houlakin and the lovely Flemish Countess, and tell what tournaments were held, and how many lances were broken, upon so interesting an occasion; nor withhold from the curious reader the number of sturdy boys, who inherited the valour of Quentin Durward, and of bright damsels, in whom were renewed the charms of Isabelle de Croye. I replied in course of post, that times were changed, and public weddings were entirely out of fashion. In days, traces of which I myself can remember, not only were the « fifteen friends» of the happy pair invited to witness their union, but the bridal minstrelsy still continued, as in the « Ancient Mariner,» to « nod their heads» till morning shone on them. The sack-posset was eaten in the nuptial chamber—the stocking was thrown—and the bride's garter was struggled for in presence of the happy couple whom Hymen had made one flesh. The authors of the period were laudably accurate in following its fashions. They spared you not a blush of the bride, not a rapturous glance of the bridegroom, not a diamond in her hair, not a button on his embroidered waistcoat; until at length, with Astræa, « they fairly put their characters to bed.» But how little does this agree with the

modest privacy which induces our modern brides—sweet bashful darlings—to steal from pomp and plate, and admiration and flattery, and, like honest Shenstone,

« Seek for freedom at an inn. »

To these, unquestionably, an exposure of the circumstances of publicity with which a bridal in the fifteenth century was always celebrated, must appear in the highest degree disgusting. Isabelle de Croye would be ranked in their estimation far below the maid who milks, and does the meanest chars; for even she, were it in the church-porch, would reject the hand of her journeyman shoe-maker, should he propose « *faire des noces,* » as it is called in Parisian signs, instead of going down on the top of the long coach to spend the honey-moon *incognito* at Deptford or Greenwich. I will not, therefore, tell more of this matter, but will steal away from the wedding, as Ariosto from that of Angelica, leaving it to whom it may please to add further particulars, after the fashion of their own imagination.

« Some better bard shall sing in feudal state
How Bracquemont's Castle oped its Gothic gate,
When on the wand'ring Scot its lovely heir
Bestow'd her beauty and an earldom fair. »[1]

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[1] « E come a ritornare in sua contrada
Trovasse e buon naviglio, e miglior tempo,
E dell' India a Medor desse lo scettro,
Forse altri canterà con miglior plettro. »
ORLANDO FURIOSO, *Canto XXX. Stanza* 16.

THE END.

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Scott, Walter,

Quentin Durward in three volumes

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